

Agenda Item 4

MELKSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL

Date: 30 September 2024

Report on Assembly Hall/Blue Pool Development

1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to update Councillors on the Assembly Hall/Blue Pool project and to outline necessary steps for the next stages of the business plan, ensuring clarity of goals, funding, and project implementation.

2. Background

- A full timeline of council discussions and resolutions is provided separately. Key recent developments include:
 - **6 November 2023:** The Assembly Hall Working Group delegated authority to the Town Clerk for submission of needs and suggestions.
 - **27 November 2023:** Council opted for a different strategy regarding architect appointments, tasking Councillor Aves and the Committee Clerk with drafting a brief for architect feedback.
 - **22 January 2024:** Architects' feedback was presented to the council, with a decision for the Head of Operations to present further suggestions in March.

3. Current Situation

- **Architect Involvement:** Two architects have conducted site visits and expressed interest. Clarity is needed on project requirements, delivery methods, and compensation.
- **Operational Staffing:** Two Deputy Assembly Hall Managers, though the Head of Operations remains partially involved.
- **Officer Capacity** to lead on project: Locum Town Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Head of Operations Services

4. Key Steps for Business Plan Development

Step 1: Define Clear Project Objectives

- **Council Decision on Blue Pool:** Determine if the Blue Pool should be acquired based on terms offered by Wiltshire Council.
- **Vision & Mandate:** Define the precise objectives and outcomes that the council expects from the Assembly Hall/Blue Pool project (e.g., community engagement, potential revenue generation, modern event facilities).

Step 2: Financial Planning and Funding Options

- **Public Procurement Compliance:** Ensure all procurement processes comply with public regulations, particularly when tendering for services.
- **Financial Projections:** Prepare a detailed analysis of project costs, including design, construction, and operational expenses.
- **Funding Strategies:** Consider pursuing a **Public Works Loan** or other forms of financial assistance, such as grants or partnerships, to cover expenses.
- **Revenue Opportunities:** Project potential revenue streams (event hosting, community programs) once the facility is operational.

Step 3: Risk and Environmental Assessments

- **Risk Assessment:** Financial Planning, Town & County Planning
- **Environmental Impact:** Address the environmental considerations typical of large building projects, such as sustainability, energy efficiency, and minimization of carbon footprints.

Step 4: Architectural and Design Planning

- **Architect Appointments:** Confirm project requirements with the architects. Ensure they understand the desired outcomes and timeline.
- **Consultancy Assistance:** Consider engaging professionals to assist in managing the architectural plan and to ensure alignment with council goals.

Step 5: Community and Strategic Alignment

- **Community Involvement:** Ensure that the project aligns with Melksham Town Council's strategic aim of community inclusivity, engagement, and improving residents' quality of life.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Engage community members, local businesses, and key stakeholders throughout the planning process to gather input and support.

5. Financial Implications

- The full extent of financial implications is yet to be determined. The project, however, promises long-term benefits by creating a modern facility that can generate income for the town council.

6. Risk Assessment, Safeguarding, Crime, and Disorder Implications

- Risks associated with large gatherings need to be accounted for, but there is no precedent for such issues at the existing Assembly Hall.

7. Environmental Considerations

- All standard environmental concerns for large-scale projects, including sustainability, should be considered during planning and construction phases.

8. Recommendations

In light of the project status and the responses from architects (detailed in the 22 January 2024 Committee Clerk report), it is recommended that:

- The council decides whether to take on the Blue Pool under Wiltshire Council's proposed terms.
- The project's goals be clearly defined before further architectural planning.
- The council determines whether to engage professional assistance from a qualified consultant to guide the process.
- The Council considers its financial planning of the project.

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ASSEMBLY HALL/BLUE POOL PROJECT

Timeline

Committee Clerk
Committee.clerk@melksham-tc.gov.uk

Town Hall and Assembly Hall Sub Committee Tuesday 12 November 2019

Agenda item 17. Assembly Hall Refurbishment

To receive a report on the proposed next stages of the Assembly Hall redevelopment.

To make a recommendation to Full Council on 25 November 2019 to appoint the architects.

Minute 17/19

The Town Clerk referred the Committee to the report prepared by the Assistant to the Town Clerk which included a timeline of events and recommendations regarding future action.

The Town Clerk suggested arranging an appointment with Philip Whitehead the Leader of Wiltshire Council to ensure that they were aware of the Town Council's plans for the redevelopment of the Assembly Hall and plans for the Campus site as a whole.

It was proposed by Councillor xxx and seconded by Councillor xxx to obtain three quotes for the preparation of a tender/ project brief for a feasibility study regarding the refurbishment of the Town Hall.

It was **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to obtain two additional quotes, and an updated quote from Glanville Projects, for the preparation of a tender/ project brief for a feasibility study.

Councillor Watts suggested that all agreements between the Town Council and Wiltshire Council regarding Blue Pool should be collated. In addition, Land Registry documents regarding ownership should be obtained.

Notes

This is outside of the period of the current council's deliberations but I have include it because the report details a useful Outline Design Brief and Schedule of Requirements. I am unable to confirm if the resolution was followed through.

Appendix A – Report of the Assistant to the Town Clerk

Asset Management and Amenities Committee Monday 5 June 2023

Agenda item 10 Public Owned Assets in and around the Town Hall

To consider the motion of Councillor Ellis

Minute 169/23

Councillor Ellis went over his proposal and advised that Wiltshire Council are willing to open a constructive dialog on the future ownership of the Blue Pool site with the Town Council.

The following matters were discussed:

- The appropriate forum to take this matter forward and the involvement of outside groups. Some felt that this was such a big issue that it should be dealt with by Full Council. Some felt more appropriate for a smaller group to do the initial work.
- The possibility of the site being used as an open-air lido.
- The possibility of involving The Town Hall and former Art Café in the project
- The costs and financing of the project
- Amendment would be required to the Assembly Hall Working Group Terms of Reference which will need approval of Full Council
- Arrange a site visit of the Blue Pool
- Request FoMAH to come up with proposals, and note this is not the council's only route
- The Assembly Hall Terms of reference do not cover the redevelopment of the Assembly Hall, this would mean a radical change to those terms of reference
- Full Council should determine who is best to work on the project

It was proposed by Councillor Ellis, seconded by Councillor Goodhind and **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the town council register its interest in the Blue Pool site with Wiltshire Council, establish a timeline and find out whether any potential procurement would be pre or post demolition, enquire about access to the site from the Campus end of the site.

That the Assembly Hall Working Group Terms of reference are amended at the next Full Council meeting which will enable input from volunteers in the community on potential proposals for the site which will include the Town Hall, 31 Market Place and the Art House Cafe.

That the Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall are asked to come up with proposals.

That the matter be referred to Full Council to decide on the remit of the working group

Notes

Appendix B – Motion of Councillor Ellis

Full Council Monday 26 June 2023

Agenda item 14 Remit of Melksham Assembly Hall Working Group

On 5 June 2023 the Asset Management and Amenities Committee discussed a proposal from Councillor Ellis (see attached) and resolved as follows.

Recites resolution from Monday 5th June 2023, then adds-

Current terms of reference are attached.

A further proposal has now been received from Councillor Ellis as follows:

Request to Full Council to reconfigure the Assembly Hall Working Group, with members of the Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall, into a working group of the full council to investigate and progress the future of the Assembly Hall, the linked building currently the Blue Pool and the immediate surrounds bordering the Campus.

Next steps:

1. Authorise the Assembly Hall Working Group, to comprise current members and representatives of the Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall and museum and hub interests, to investigate the possible further with a structural survey leading to an outline business case and costing. We would request a budget of around £5000 for this initial professional work. The group will also be informed by the needs assessment, Cluster 1 research by the neighbourhood plan team, and further user and community interaction.
2. To gain access for members of FoMAH and AHWG already involved to the Blue Pool to help the team evaluate the possible and to get a measure of the building and opportunities so that we can fill in the details
3. To progress liaison with Wiltshire Council concerning the transfer of the Blue Pool to the ownership of the Town Council should an agreement be reached between the parties and that to be fitting with the strategic plans of the Town Council.
4. To allow these groups concerned to meet within the Assembly Hall or other available Town council rooms to progress their work, with internal accounting to cover the costs thereof as with other working groups.

The outcomes from the above will be a feasibility report to full council. Should the group consider option(s) practical and recommendable, it will include a road map to decide and progress the project looking at the ultimate use / needs for Melksham and how we would get there and provide an affordable and sustainable set of facilities into the future, looking ahead at the next 15 years.

A meeting of AHWG/FoMAH is proposed for the evening of Tuesday 4th July (or 5th if better) with an agenda to include composition, terms of reference, appointment of officers, allocation of initial roles and business plan.

Minute 544/23

Councillor Ellis set out the details of his proposal. There was general support for the proposal but some concern over the make-up and voting rights of the working group. It was suggested that the Working Group be open to all councillors and that members of the public be invited to

give input. There was discussion of the scope of the project, Wiltshire Council's position on the Blue Pool and the remit of the Working Group, with some feeling the options outlined were too narrow. Some amendments were suggested and accepted by Councillor Ellis as friendly amendments

It was proposed by Councillor Ellis, seconded by Councillor Goodhind, and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

- That the Assembly Hall Working Group (AHWG) Terms of Reference be amended so the group sits under the Full Council and not Asset and Amenities Committee.
- That the AHWG would be open to all council members, with a quorum of 5 elected members.
- That, within a time limit of three months, the AHWG will consider at least 3 options including but not limited to Repurpose, Redevelop and Do Not Take Project On.
- That the AHWG will explore and provide "Ball Park Figures".
- That a budget of £10000 be allocated from The Major Projects Earmarked Reserves for professional fees.

Full Council Monday 17 July 2023

Agenda item 11 Blue Pool Update

To receive a presentation from the Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall

Minute 559/23

Councillor Ellis gave a presentation on work he had undertaken with the Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall.

Following this Councillor Alford felt that this project was to be considered by the Full Council working group of the Assembly Hall and this has missed out any connection with the town council. It is great to see ideas for the project but as a town council we have not followed the proper process.

Questions were asked about getting the views of an architect, quantity surveyor or structural engineer and which order that should be in. Why was a quantity surveyor chosen?

There was a feeling that officers had not moved quickly enough to set up working group meeting.

It was proposed by Councillor Ellis, seconded Councillor Alford and **RESOLVED** that a meeting of the Full Council working group be set up immediately which would include the Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall.

Standing Orders were suspended at 9.31pm to enable members of Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall to comment.

Q. Can the town council obtain ownership of the Blue Pool? – A. Yes.

Q. MS felt that this is a proposal is very well put together. Councillors haven't got a good track record for getting things done and why can't we get on with it? A. the original motion put in place by the council was to have a working group meeting take place to discuss options, we can't delegate responsibility to others outside the council.

Overall the 'Friends of' felt that more urgency should be given to the project

Notes

I cannot see that any further meeting of the working group took place

Appendix C – Submission of the Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall

Full Council Thursday 17 August 2023

Agenda item 4 Assembly Hall Roof

To receive the report of the consultant and consider next steps. If members are in agreement that the works are to go ahead to also agree to waive Standing Orders and Financial Regulations in light of the fact that only one contractor has submitted a quote. The report demonstrates what lengths have been taken in trying to obtain three quotations. (Report to follow)

Members to note: In view of the potential opportunity to acquire the Blue Pool; which could involve some restructure to the Assembly Hall; that an options appraisal is drawn up by a quantity surveyor which sets out how the town council can achieve best value for money before investing in patching and repairs but at the same time preserves the building for continued safe use.

Minute 565/23

It was generally agreed that £90000 was a lot of money to spend when the Assembly Hall and Blue Pool may be redeveloped but that something needed to be done. Councillors put forward their views on what action to take. At one point standing orders were suspended to allow Councillor Hubbard to speak.

It was suggested to draw a line under the current quote and engage with local contractors. The difficulty experienced so far in getting contractors to quote was pointed out. A question was asked about the terms of the tender and whether a contractor could be asked to quote on bare minimum repairs for differing lengths of time. Members were reminded that the one quote was from a local contractor and discussions could be held with them on the terms suggested.

It was proposed by Councillor Rabey, seconded by Councillor Westbrook and **RESOLVED** to speak to the contractors who had quoted to obtain quotes for bare minimum patching requirements over differing lengths of time.

It was proposed by The Deputy Mayor and Chair of the meeting Councillor Price, seconded by Councillor Rabey, and **RESOLVED** to spend up to £10000 to get a Structural Engineer to analyse the future feasibility of the Assembly Hall and The Blue Pool and come back with their findings as soon as possible.

Note

This item was mainly about Assembly Hall roof repairs but have included it for completeness sake.

Full Council Monday 25 September 2023

Agenda item 22

22.1 Updating report

To receive an updating report on progress.

22.2 Asset Transfer

For decision – Whether to accept the transfer of the Blue Pool on the terms suggested.

22.3 RIBA Competition

For decision – Whether to hold a RIBA Competition for design of the Assembly Hall/Blue Pool site

Minute 592/23 Updating report

The updating report was received.

593/23 Asset Transfer

It was generally felt that a decision could not be made at this meeting.

It was proposed by the Town Mayor Councillor S Crundell, seconded by Councillor Hubbard and **RESOLVED** to leave all options on the table and make no decision pending receipt of the structural engineers report. Councillor Alford abstained.

594/23 RIBA Competition

The Town Mayor Councillor S Crundell proposed an Architecture Prize to obtain blueprints and options for use of the building.

There was discussion, after which the Town Mayor Councillor S Crundell withdrew his proposal.

Councillor Hubbard asked for the plans that were put before the old council to come before the current council. The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell asked the Locum Clerk to try to find the plans.

Notes

I have no idea what happened to the earlier plans. The locum referred to above was the Locum Deputy Clerk at that time.

Appendix D – Updating report

Appendix E – RIBA Competitions Guidance

I have not included the Asset Transfer document as I assume this information remains confidential.

Full Council Monday 30 October 2023

Agenda item 16.1 Blue Pool

To consider Blue Pool Structural Report.

For decision.

Minute 620/23

Councillor Ellis suggested an Assembly Hall Working Group meeting be called. There was discussion on a date. Officers advised they would struggle to find capacity to prepare due to Neighbourhood Plan Consultation and other commitments

Councillor Hubbard felt that the Council should first decide on what they want from the Assembly Hall/Blue Pool site and this would then feed into a decision at a later date on how to achieve.

Other councillors agreed that proceeding on this basis would allow a meeting to take place next week.

It was **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to hold an Assembly Hall Working Group meeting next Monday to discuss what the Council want from the Assembly Hall of the future.

Notes

Appendix F – Structural Report

Appendix G -Report of Head of Ops

Assembly Hall Working Group Monday 6th November 2023

Agenda item 4 Future of the Assembly Hall and Blue Pool

At the full council meeting on Monday 30 October 2023 it was decided to hold this meeting to discuss and decide on what the Council wants from the Assembly Hall. Once this has been decided, it will facilitate further discussions at a later date about options for the Assembly Hall and Blue Pool.

Minute 48/23

Introductions were made and the chair, Councillor Ellis gave an opening statement.

There was discussion on the parameters of the meeting and it was re-iterated that what was wanted needed to be decided before how to do it.

There was discussion on what members wanted. The following were mentioned

- Bigger bar space/More than one bar
- Bigger generally
- More toilets
- Improved dressing rooms
- Car parking
- Re-designed entrance/ Bigger atrium
- Better access for bands
- Tiered/Retractable seating
- Ability to partition into smaller, soundproof rooms
- Storage depot (instead of building in KGV)

Councillor Crundell said it was not just about what was wanted, but what the group wanted to retain, for example, the flooring.

Views were expressed that the Council should be “brave and bold” and that if the facilities were available it would attract bigger acts. The Cheese and Grain in Frome was mentioned as an example of having a clear, bold vision and following it through.

There was discussion on whether to hold an architects Competition, appoint an architect, appoint a quality surveyor or appoint a management company.

It was suggested by Councillor Cooke that the items listed in Councillor Ellis’ introduction should be ranked in order of preference. Councillor Hubbard suggested that members chose their top 5 items and the committee clerk would collate the results.

Councillor Alford suggested that the matter could be delegated to Officers. Councillor Hubbard asked if the Town Clerk could proceed on the existing mandate from council.

The Town Clerk confirmed that sufficient sums remained from the budget allocated to allow her to proceed.

It was proposed by Councillor Hubbard and seconded by Councillor Westbrook, to delegate authority to the Town Clerk to take the matter forward and to submit the list of needs/suggestions as it stands.

A vote of those present at the meeting unanimously supported this.

A vote of councillors present unanimously agreed that they considered the current mandate of full council sufficient for the Town Clerk to proceed.

Councillor Aves had left the meeting at 8:30pm, before the vote.

Full Council Monday 27 November 2023

Agenda item 11 Blue Pool/Assembly Hall

To approve the appointment of consultants MEA to manage the approach to obtain an options appraisal from 3 architects.

Minute 632/23

There was discussion on what was required.

It was proposed by Councillor Hubbard, seconded by Councillor Rabey and **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that Councillor Aves and the Committee Clerk draft a brief for architects, to then be circulated to members for comment. Any suggestions for architects to be forwarded to the Committee Clerk who is delegated to circulate the brief to architects

Notes

Appendix H – Options appraisal

Full Council Monday 22 January 2024

Agenda item 13 Assembly Hall/Blue Pool

To receive a report on replies to the brief sent to architects in December.

For decision on next steps.

Minute 684/23

The report on responses from architects was received.

There was discussion on the next step. Councillor Ellis suggested the Assembly Hall Working Group meet with Mark Saint. Councillor Hubbard suggested appointing an Assembly Hall manager and bring them into the process.

Head of Operations felt that if an Assembly Hall manager was in place, he would be less operationally involved and would have some capacity to manage the regeneration project, however that plays out.

There was discussion of the options.

It was proposed by Councillor Hubbard, seconded by the Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell and **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the Head of Operations do report back to the Full Council meeting in March with suggestions for how to proceed.

Notes

Due to the problems with staffing levels and capacity there has been no further action since this date.

Appendix I – Approaches to architects for Assembly Hall/Blue Pool project.

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APPENDIX A

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING - 11TH NOVEMBER 2019

MELKSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Report of the Assistant to the Town Clerk – Patsy Clover

SUBJECT: ASSEMBLY HALL REFURBISHMENT/ REDEVELOPMENT

1. Summary

1.1 This report sets out the current position regarding the proposed refurbishment/ redevelopment of the Assembly Hall. A timeline is attached. (Appendix 1)

2. Background

2.1 An Outline Design Brief was prepared by the Town Council in January 2017 and revised for RIBA 1 and 2. The three core aims for the Assembly Hall going forward at this stage were:

- 2.1.1 To be a vital constituent of the social and recreational fabric of the town by promoting and hosting an eclectic mix of events and activities
- 2.1.2 To be a valued asset and an accessible resource for the community, at the heart of the community it serves
- 2.1.3 To run as cost effectively as possible and generate income streams that will reduce the financial burden on the local taxpayer.

2.2 To fulfil these aims, the following objectives were set:

- 2.2.1 Hosting community activities and events with cross-demographic and cross-socio-economic appeal
- 2.2.2 Promoting an eclectic mix of live and screened live entertainment that will increase and diversify audiences
- 2.2.3 Providing a sustainable, ongoing and established community cinema facility that will attract audiences throughout the demographic spectrum, thereby promoting social cohesion
- 2.2.4 Attracting commercial patronage of a versatile and flexible facility for a wide range of events and functions
- 2.2.5 Showcasing the Hall as an attractive recreational venue with a customer focused hospitality team offering high quality but affordable entertainment and raising the profile of the Hall as a destination venue for those living outside the immediate area.

2.2.6 The Town Council decided in January 2017 that it was unable to progress the concept of integrating the Assembly Hall into the prospective health and well-being centre as part of the Campus proposition and determined instead to redevelop the Assembly Hall in situ.

2.3 A schedule of requirements was created as follows:

- 2.3.1 Large Hall auditorium space (maybe split level or tiered retractable seating) to seat at least 450 in theatre; 250 in cabaret 600 standing possibly with ability to be partitioned into smaller spaces
- 2.3.2 Bar/foyer/lounge/atrium type area, suitable for informal and non-confidential meetings
- 2.3.3 Entrance/reception area and focal entrance point
- 2.3.4 Suite of rooms offering flexibility to provide between 1 and 4 discrete breakout spaces of varying size/capacity for meetings/training/conferences etc
- 2.3.5 Large (maybe retractable) stage at least 1.5m high and at least 15m x 8m capable of staging orchestras/bands/dance
- 2.3.6 Stage storage/backstage facility with level load in at stage height and roller shutter for truck access with capacity to accommodate bulky equipment e.g model car club
- 2.3.7 Dedicated access for delivery or production vehicles to stage storage facility and ample parking for two large vehicles and three vans/cars
- 2.3.8 Purpose built dance floor
- 2.3.9 Box Office
- 2.3.10 Integrated lighting and audio facilities including cinema projection and retractable screens that will provide flexibility to screen to large audiences as well as smaller groups in a partitioned room
- 2.3.11 Quality acoustics and sound proofing internally and externally
- 2.3.12 Ergonomically designed commercial standard catering kitchen facility including cold prep room; chiller room (walk-in fridge); and washing up room
- 2.3.13 Larger bar and cafe area including tables and chairs with common circulation potential
- 2.3.14 Facilities management office
- 2.3.15 R&R facility/communal area that staff may use for breaks
- 2.3.16 Cloakroom space (desirable if space allows)
- 2.3.17 Toilets – (suggested provision: M= 4 cubicles; 8 urinals; L = 12 cubicles; D = 2 cubicles)
- 2.3.18 Strong room (central location to service bar and catering areas for cash handling and safe storage)
- 2.3.19 Bar cellar adjacent to bar area and external wall for ease of delivery
- 2.3.20 Furniture storage (chairs, tables etc)
- 2.3.21 Dressing rooms x 3 with en-suite toilets and showers
- 2.3.22 Production room close to dressing rooms and stage
- 2.3.23 Amp room (air conditioned)

- 2.3.24 Front of house control room or facility
- 2.3.25 Plant room
- 2.3.26 Cleaner's storage
- 2.3.27 Facility accessible to all users, environmentally friendly and energy efficient

2.4 It was anticipated that the Town Council would look to finance the redevelopment from its reserves and loan finance from the Public Works Loan Board.

2.5 It was agreed that the Town Council would undertake a feasibility study process seeking initial ideas and costed schemes from local architects. Maximum budgets would be sought to include all professional and technical fees and permissions and allowing a contingency of 20%.

2.6 Preliminary design briefs requesting expressions of interest and fee proposals for a strategic brief, a business appraisal and an indication of the level of financial investment needed were sent to selected architects on 10 April 2017.

2.7 At the Asset Management Committee Meeting held on 7 August 2017, it was RESOLVED to appoint CaSA architects at a fixed fee of £2,500 + VAT and expenses to undertake the initial stage (RIBA Stage 0) of work to formulate a way forward with regard to producing a strategic brief for project planning/ feasibility studies prior to going out to tender. Appendix 2.

2.8 In the light of CaSA's report, topographical, conditions and asbestos surveys were carried out. Appendices 3 – 5.

2.9 The possibility of redeveloping all or part of the Blue Pool site, once demolished, in order to facilitate parking for the Assembly Hall as part of the refurbishment/ redevelopment was proposed in the Asset Management Committee Meeting on 2 January 2018. However, no response was received to enquiries made to Wiltshire Council. This action point remains outstanding.

3. Position Summer 2018

3.1 Following the completion of the RIBA Stage 0 work by CaSA architects it was RESOLVED at the annual Council meeting of Melksham Town Council on 14 May 2018 to explore the appointment of a suitably qualified and experienced consultant to advise and guide the Town Council to bring this project to fruition.

3.2 Approaches were made to several firms of architects in June 2018 asking for expressions of interest in an Architectural Advisor Support role and an indication of fees for RIBA Stages 1 and 2.

3.3 Quotes have been provided by the following:

S R Architects Ltd (Appendix 6) – hourly or day rate.

Glanville Projects (Appendix 7) - £40,000 for project management services inclusive of disbursements and £38,000 for quantity surveying services inclusive of disbursements.

CaSA Architects had provided a quote previously in February 2018 of £12,500 plus VAT plus expenses (Appendix 8).

Vitriuviusms expressed an intention to quote once the Town Council were in a position to proceed.

Councillor Tony Watts advised that Charcoalblue Theatrical Innovation would also be interested in bidding for the feasibility study.

4. Recommendation

4.1 To make a recommendation to Full Council to appoint CaSA Architects to take the project forward to completion of the feasibility study under RIBA Stage 1 and RIBA Stage 2 (partial) in view of their previous involvement. The budget for the architect's fees to come from the major projects reserve.

4.2 Once the feasibility study has been completed, it will be referred back to Council to progress the project to tender.

APPENDIX B

MELKSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE Assets and Amenities COMMITTEE

5/ June / 2023

Public Owned Assets in and around the Town Hall

Proposed by: Councillor Graham Ellis

Seconded by: Councillor Colin Goodhind

Dated: 29th May 2023

1. Purpose of the motion

I request that we take an urgent, visionary joined-up look to the future of publicly owned assets in and around the Town Hall and Assembly Hall with a view to setting a strategy for Melksham Town Council assets and the amenities they provide for the next ten years. I further request that we then follow that vision before potential opportunities are lost.

2. Background (Including previous resolution/s made and date/s if applicable)

We are here as a Town Council to provide services (directly or indirectly) for the enrichment of our community now and into the future out of a communal funding pot predominantly funded by the Council Tax precept. Those services require infrastructure and staff to support them, of which we also provide or assist with the provision.

Planning for this provision is often long term, and our Visioning Day in the summer of 2021 should have helped set the strategy so that longer term plans are reflected in shorter term decisions.

3. Current Situation

We have a number of potential risks and opportunities at present, relating to the future of the infrastructure of Melksham House, The Blue Pool, The Assembly Hall, and the Town Hall. We also have a number of desires or requirements on the service provision by the Town Council, such as council offices, a council chamber and meeting rooms, a community venue, a museum, parking, and a maintenance depot for our parks and gardens team.

** On town Aspirations or requirements

1. Offices for Town Council Staff

2. Public reception desk for the Town Council

3. An events venue to meet current needs, and as appropriate, those identified by the needs analysis survey of last November and December

4. A Council chamber or equivalent for Town Council meetings

5. A Museum for Melksham

6. A maintenance shed / depot for our amenities team

7. Parking for staff and visitors

There may be other requirements within our community that can also be usefully included, such as the Melksham Independent News, The Good News Church and Wiltshire Council's SEMH department / centre. This list is not exclusive - there may be other opportunities

** On existing buildings

1. The Town Hall

2. The Assembly Hall

3. The Cheese Store

4. The Blue Pool (*)

5. Melksham House (*)

6. The Old Fire Station

7. 31 Market Place

* - Also in public ownership / not necessarily Town Council

Question from resident Howard Jones to full council on 22nd May

Howard asked us whether we would consider his proposal at the next appropriate committee meeting and the mayor promised him and all other public questioners a written response. In view of time being of the essence, I am putting his proposal to the Assets and Amenities Committee on 5th June 2023.

Note - this committee is not scheduled to meet again after 5th June for another 9 weeks after than date, and if anything is referred at that point to full council it would not reach them on current schedule until 25th September.

Howard's proposal was circulated in print to all present on 22nd May, and is attached, and is online at <http://melksham.town/Blue> . As a councillor I believe it merits further immediate consideration with a view to its adoption as our vision for our town centre assets. In summary:

* Town Council take on the old Blue Pool building which becomes the new maintenance depot, (pool area), museum (Gym area) and Assembly Hall reception area. Also Town Council's "front desk" for public enquiries

* Assembly Hall Bar area improved and expanded

* Water tanks removed from Cheese Store

* Restore the caretaker's flat

* Town Hall to remain as is, as our iconic offices and council chamber

* Current tenants of the Art House Cafe and 31, Market Place to be unaffected

* Melksham House to be available to SEMH rather than the Town Council entering into any form of bidding war to purchase it.

4. What financial implications are there?

1. There are many questions to be answered (starting with Howard's FOI) and our officers tell us they are overloaded at present. On jobs as routine as fixing leaks in the Assembly Hall we hear "I think numerous roofers have looked at it, got sick of the messing about and heel dragging and some quite rightly now don't want to waste their precious time looking again when it hasn't come to anything" - not sure how true that is, but working within the council structure can be frustrating

2. Funding streams for both museum and event venue / Assembly Hall are limited to a town / parish council - far more so than to other organisations

3. There is a pool of people happy to volunteer / help (one or two with running the thing at the Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall if and when the opportunity can be harnessed.

4. The Assembly Hall working group has been struggling. Meetings in members' diaries have not been called, accounting information has been limited, and recommendations with regard fees for this year were "anecdotal" which for a business turning over around £130,000 per annum concerns me. The group's rules of engagement have been bounced back several times, and perhaps it's time to reset.

5. If implemented, the council will no longer need to spend higher figures on the purchase, hire or building of new facilities such as a maintenance shed in the park, at Bowerhill or elsewhere or elsewhere on the Melksham House property.

Suggestion - taking a leaf out of organisation in towns such as Frome and Devizes, move to a structure such as a CIC (Community Interest Company) for the museum and Assembly Hall, relieving council officers of the pressures, and accessing new funding streams and volunteer helpers.

5. How does the motion link to Town Council policies and core values?

The proposal will provide excellent facilities to meet the core objectives of the council to meet the need assessment of last December, the provision of an efficient maintenance shed, a future set of assets and amenities that can be sustained making use of current infrastructure within the town and with the environmental including climate and biodiversity consideration.

6. What risks are there? (Provide a risk assessment)

- The risk of us doing nothing - progressive degradation of the Assembly Hall and officers' time that's not available being called on
- The risk of losing an opportunity with the Blue Pool then having to spend a lot of money elsewhere
- Further risk assessment will be provided within the next phase prior to any further decisions at full councillor

7. What crime and disorder implications are there?

- Removal of the wall between the Blue Pool and Melksham Campus (dating from outdoor swimming pool days) would remove dark corners and opportunities for antisocial behaviour;
- Provision of a less cramped reception area and one which covers multiple disparate facilities allows for more efficient crowd control.

8. What environmental and biodiversity considerations are there?

Depending on works needed, the works would be environmentally considerate - for example any reroof could be open to solar panel roof which would also cut the energy running costs of all the buildings.

9. What safeguarding concerns are there?

- no new issues?

10. Motion

It is resolved that the council staff with volunteer assistance from members of the Assembly Hall Working Group and friends of the Assembly Hall bring a researched proposal to full council prior to any irreversible actions or decisions on the public domain properties.

11. Does the motion impact/ support any previous decisions of council?

It impacts the decision on 28th March to offer not less than £2.1 million for Melksham House now that we are aware that Wiltshire Council's SEMH decision of February to place their SEMH as the favoured bidder has come to light.

It supports the outcome of the needs assessment consultation of last December in the provision for our electorate.

It supports the decision to demolish rather than replace the maintenance shed

12. Confirmation that the item under consideration has not been discussed by Council within the preceding six months. If it has, has there been a material change and what is this?

This item has not been discussed by the council within the last six months.

13. Please summarise any specific recommendations you have in relation to next steps

The next step is to fill in the overview outline for full council.

We should set up a team (AHWG, FoMAH) to progress this with time likely to be of the essence. It is anticipated that most of the activity will be by volunteers (councillors and community) at this stage rather than adding significantly to staff loading.

We should approach Wiltshire Council to ask about their willingness to discuss the transfer of the Blue Pool to the Town Council and for us to gain access for our overview team and experts to survey the works involved.

V 1.0 GE

Office Use:

Date of receipt by Proper Officer:

Date of proposed council meeting for motion:

Date/s of relevant resolutions:

(record full resolution/s here)

Motion accepted by Proper Officer:

Motion rejected by Proper Officer:

Reasons for rejection:

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The Acquisition of Melksham Blue Pool for the Purpose of Combining it with the Melksham Assembly Hall

Wiltshire Council, in their planning application for the building of Melksham Campus, plan to demolish the Blue Pool building, infill the pool, and sell the land for private ownership.

However, there remains an open question as to who actually owns the land where the Blue Pool resides. This needs to be resolved before a full decision as to the next step.

HISTORY

Melksham and Urban District Council bought the land from Avon Indian Rubber Co in 1959 for use as a swimming pool. It then opened under the operation of MUDC.

In 1984, West Wiltshire District Council built the leisure centre in Trowbridge, but the Castle Place site was owned by Norwich Union Group and the property was then leased for 20 years for the sports centre.

In 1988, WWDC ran several advertisements in various newspapers announcing: "Indoor pools at Warminster, Westbury, Bradford-on-Avon, and this summer the new blue pool opening in Melksham." Renovations had been made by WWDC to the Blue Pool; however, the grand opening had been delayed due to a number of failures.

From these reports, it is apparent that WWDC paid for the renovation and/or building of Wiltshire leisure centres. But it is not clear if the Melksham Blue Pool land was actually purchased or leased from MUDC, or, if, in the 1970s, there was simply an asset transfer.

PROPOSAL TO ACQUIRE BLUE POOL

Would it be practical for Melksham Town Council to obtain the Blue Pool and combine it with the Assembly Hall for a vast improvement, at a sensible cost? This could be either by an asset transfer from Wiltshire Council, or claiming its rightful ownership.

Wiltshire Council would not incur the added and costly expense of demolishing the building and removing the large water tanks that are currently within the Assembly

Hall. In view of this cost savings, they might be persuaded to accept an asset transfer agreement or peppercorn purchase price.

COMBINE THE BLUE POOL AND ASSEMBLY HALL

The building of the Blue Pool could then be incorporated into the Assembly Hall to offer several benefits such as:

- A new public entrance with reception desk and reception area
- An easier entrance point into the main hall that does not conflict with the flow of people as it does in the existing Assembly Hall Bar area (this would be achieved by opening a hole in the wall to the right of the entrance)
- Repurposing the existing Blue Pool men's locker room to make male, female and accessible toilets, which would be larger than the existing ones in the Assembly Hall
- Removing the women's locker room and storage area to create a large space that, when combined with the gym, can house a museum that includes an exhibition space and lecture area
- Infilling the pool area could add parking spaces that would be dedicated to the Assembly Hall and relieve the parking at Melksham Campus and provide parking for Melksham Town Council purposes

STAFFING

Staffing for this would solve an existing issue.

The area behind the reception desk in the Blue Pool is an office of ample size for staff. Hire a full-time person to work as Office Manager, Monday through Friday, 9-5. The responsibilities would include:

- Greeting the public in person and on the phone for the purpose of buying event tickets, booking an event, answering general questions, etc
- Managing the Assembly Hall accounts
- Arranging staff hours and volunteers for events and bar minutes
- Co-ordinating working group meetings and taking minutes
- Overseeing advertising and marketing

As this method would isolate the Assembly Hall as its own entity, this would free up work responsibilities of managers

currently feeling overworked, with this person reporting to and working directly under the Town Clerk.

The Assembly Hall would benefit from having museum volunteers who could, in turn cover for this officer's lunch breaks, etc. Likewise, the reverse.

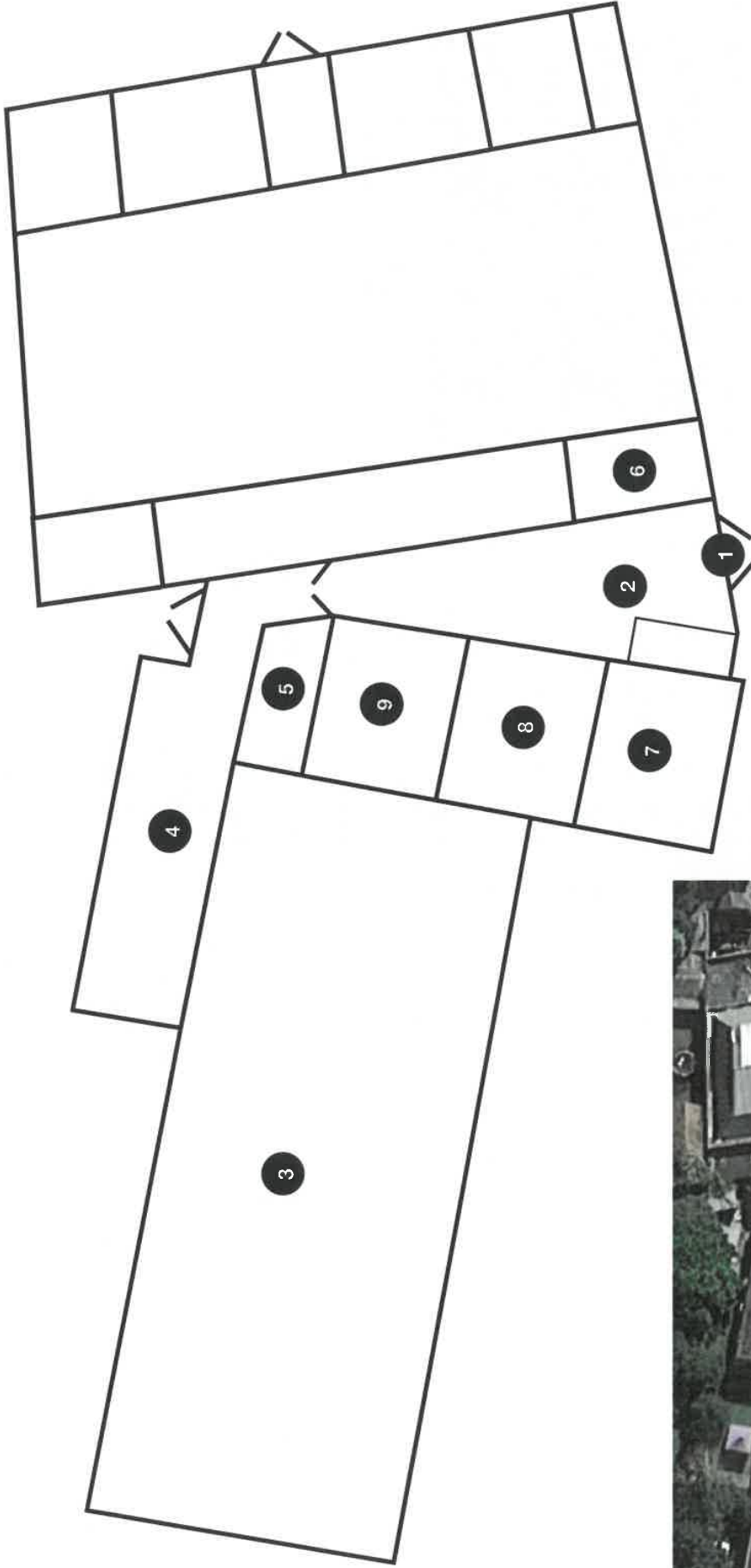


This document can be found at:
<http://Melksham.Town/BluePool>

Proposed by:
Howard Jones
jones.howard289@gmail.com

Researched by:
Lisa Ellis
lisa@sn12.net

EXISTING: Blue Pool (numbered areas) and Assembly Hall



- 1 Blue Pool Entrance
- 2 Reception
- 3 Swimming Pool
- 4 Gym
- 5 Storage
- 6 Water Tanks
- 7 Staff Office
- 8 Mens Locker
- 9 Womens Locker



1 FRONT ENTRANCE



2 RECEPTION AREA



3 SWIMMING POOL



Blue Pool as it existed
when still operating

4 GYM AREA



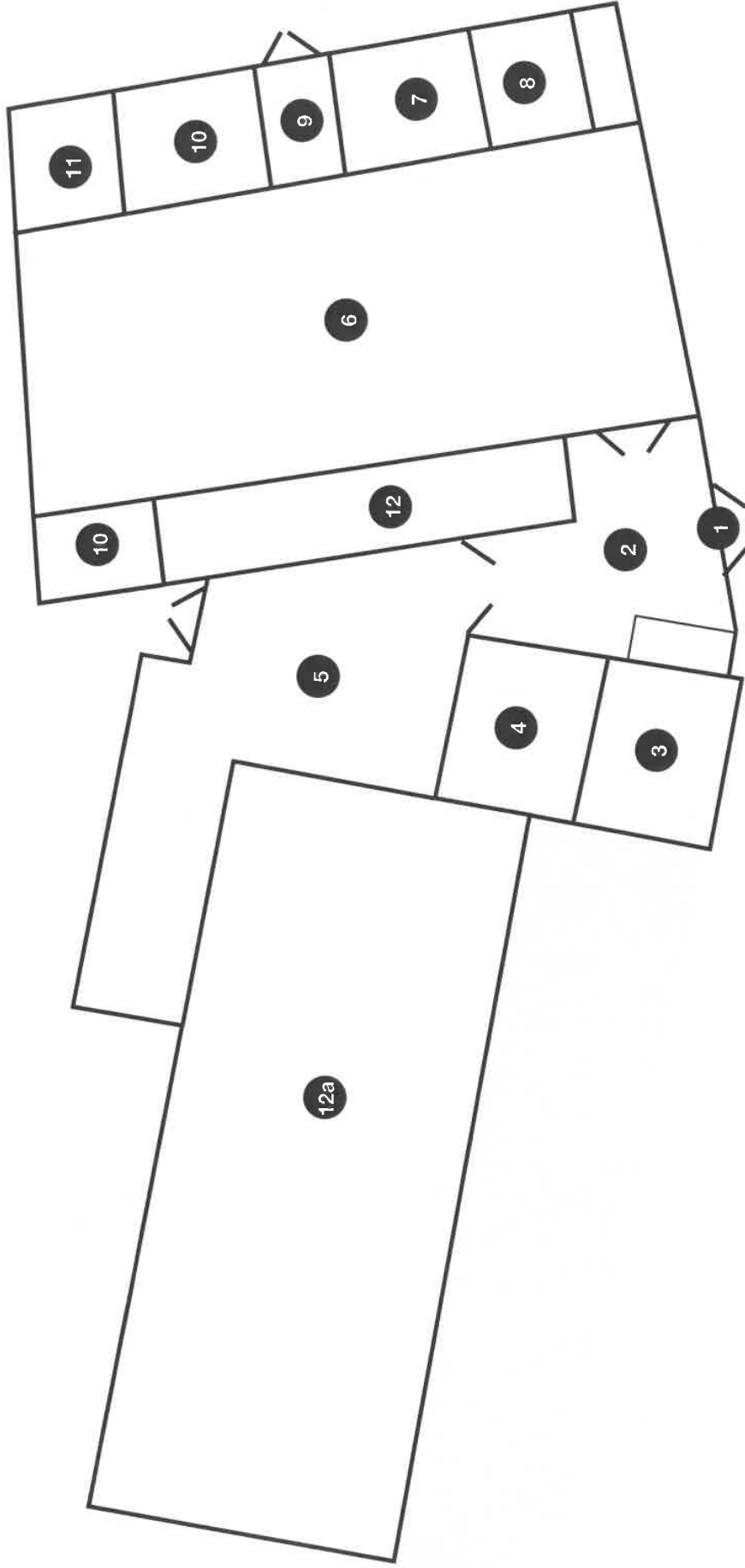
This view is facing the entrance door of the gym, down small hallway on the left. Behind the blue doors is storage. 5



View down the hallway looking toward front entrance doors



PROPOSED: Revised Assembly Hall plus Museum



- 1 New Main Entrance
- 2 Reception
- 3 Staff Office
- 4 M/F/Universal Loos
- 5 Museum
- 6 Assembly Hall (existing)
- 7 Lounge (existing)
- 8 Bar (existing)
- 9 Emergency Exit/Staff Entrance
- 10 Storage
- 11 Dressing Rooms (existing)
- 12 Kitchen/storage (existing)
- 12a Dedicated car parking for Assembly Hall Storage

APPENDIX C



Some of our important choices have a time line. If we delay a decision, the opportunity is gone forever. Sometimes our doubts keep us from making a choice that involves change. Thus an opportunity may be missed.

— James E. Faust

The opportunity for Melksham Town Council to acquire the Blue Pool premises opens a town-wide discussion over the merits of either following through or walking away. If it's decided that keeping the site for the town is preferred, should it be demolished and the land used for something related to the Assembly Hall, or something completely different? Or, perhaps the building is sound enough to make minor adjustments and incorporate it into the Assembly Hall and add other community resources.

These are questions that will be examined over the next few months, with a report back to full Town Council by 25 September, 2023.

HISTORY

It's important to lay a foundation to this decision by learning the history of the Blue Pool. While for ages, bathing in the river was the only offering, discussions about building a proper facility was an item agenda for quite a while. There were concerns about accidental drownings and females feeling unsafe in an unsupervised environment; a proper place to learn how to swim was reasoned by others. Still others wanted a bathing pool for the sake of those who had no other means to wash properly, yet didn't know how to swim well enough to be able to manage the currents of the Avon.

RIVER SWIMMING

When Avon took on Melksham House in 1920, they soon established a lido in the river in the grounds beyond. It was supervised and co-ed. Melksham Urban District



Swimming in the river - July 1916



Program for the official opening of the Blue Pool on 13 June, 1959

Council approached the Avon Sports and Social Club asking if the town residents could use these facilities. They were turned down. Then earnest talk began about the town establishing their own “Melksham Lido” in the town side of the Avon bridge, which wasn’t maintained, and ended up being condemned in 1936.

FINANCIAL PROBLEMS

Because such a venture was going to cost money that would have to be raised through an increase in rates, it was decided, following the closure of the lido, to put the vote to the rate payers. A postcard ballot asking if they would accept a rate increase to build a swimming pool for the town was sent out. A total of 154 ballots were returned. 67 were in favour, 87 against and the remaining few were spoilt.

The desire was there, the money behind it wasn’t.

TOO MANY DECISIONS

The discussions for a properly built pool went on for decades with no resolution, with the exception of ideas put forward that were never followed through. Should it be a shallow pool or one that youths could dive into? Should it be constructed as a war memorial? Where should it be sited? Should it be heated by the burn waste from Avon India Rubber?

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

A few Town Councillors who were involved in various other social organisations took up the cause, and through donations made by the Boy Scouts and the Melksham Carnival, they raised enough funds to then be fund-matched. It took around five years to raise the cash.

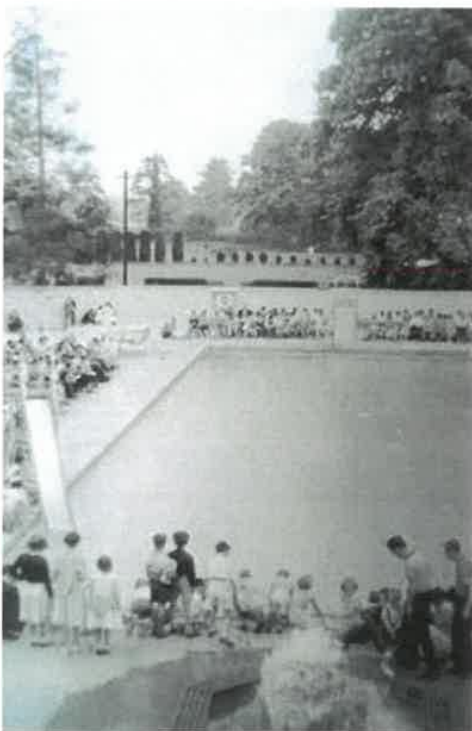
A POOL IS BORN

On 24 February, 1959, Avon India Rubber Company Limited conveyed a portion of their property to the Urban District Council for £10.

Four months later, a gala was held to celebrate the opening of the Blue Pool on that piece of land. Within the first eight weeks more than 25,000 people paid admission, totalling £1,570.

THE MONEY PIT

Swimming pools are notorious money pits. Wiltshire County Council had taken over operations of the Blue Pool and other area swimming pools by contracting to



Residents attend the official opening of the Blue Pool in 1959

West Sports Centres. In 1978, the charges didn't match the spending, and the county had lost £35,000 for staff and £18,000 for utilities. Spiralling costs were threatening to kill off centres county-wide.

THE TIDE HAS CHANGED

Less than 10 years later, tides, or perhaps opinions, apparently turned.

The occasion is something I have not been able to pin down yet, but for X Reason, Wiltshire Council decided to keep swimming and closed the Blue Pool for two years for it to undergo a massive facelift costing a half million pounds.

AS WE KNOW IT NOW

The re-opening day on 15 August, 1988 started with a dash and ended with a crash. The Blue Pool was closed again for several weeks after 50 people suffered cuts to their feet.

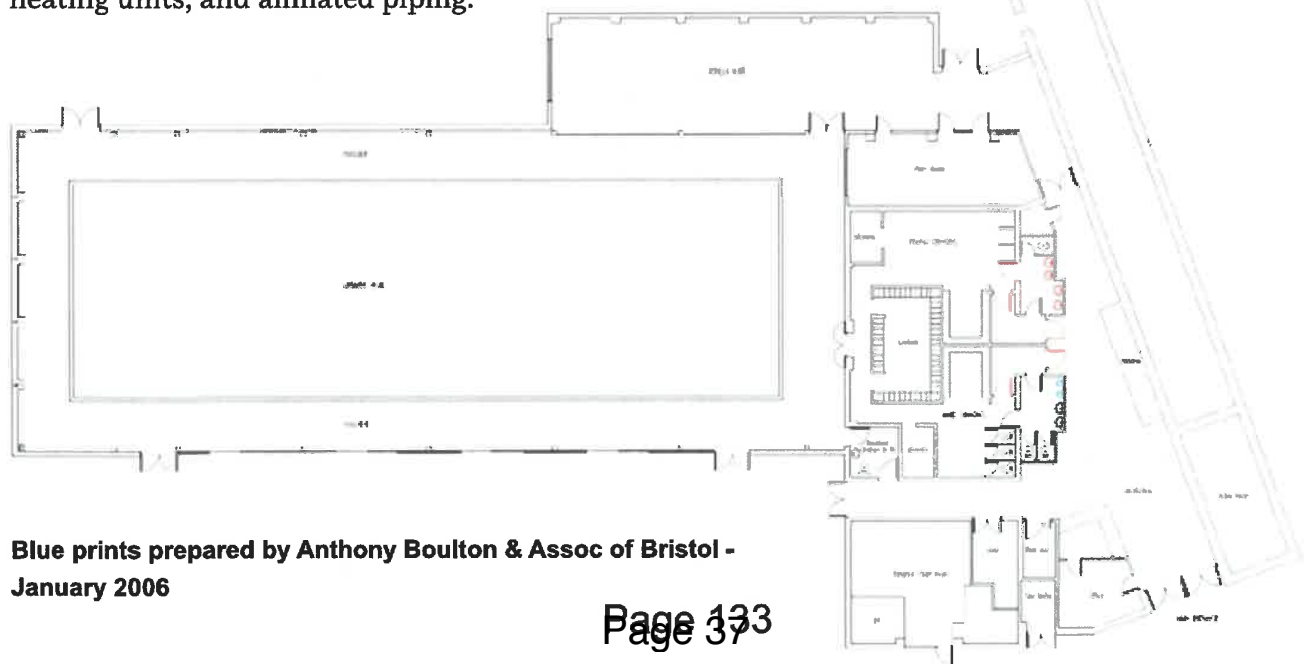
Having fixed the problems, not much has been done to the Blue Pool since 1988 except adding the roof and modifying the men's and women's changing rooms too slightly to even notice.

CLOSED FOR GOOD

That is, until it closed for good last year. The pool has been drained and much of the insides of the building have been removed, apart from the larger components, such as water and chlorine tanks, heating units, and affiliated piping.



Blue Pool in 1979; the fountain is replaced by a shallow pool for toddlers, and the slide has been removed; ladders added at the corners (photo by Tony Seager)



Blue prints prepared by Anthony Boulton & Assoc of Bristol - January 2006

Timeline of Swimming Facilities in Melksham

date	date type	regarding swimming club	location	summary	comment
28/5/1895	date of meeting	swimming club	river	public meeting held at National Schoolroom for the purpose of forming at swimming club and to ascertain the feeling in reference to the erection of a dressing room on the river bank.	use part of the upper river as the bathing place, and to invite tenders for the erection of sheds, etc. Subscriptions starting at a donation 5 guineas.
30/9/1894	transfer	parishes	Melksham Within, Melksham Without	By Local Government Board Order No. 31,684, dated 30th September, 1894, the ancient parish of Melksham was divided into two parishes, known as Melksham Within and Melksham Without	the former being the area of the Urban District, the latter, Rural District
5/8/1899	newspaper publish date	swimming club	river	Melksham is fortunate in possessing a capital site for such a purpose (of holding competitive swimming events), the river being wide and the water sufficiently deep to allow scope for good diving.	With practice, there is no reason why the Melksham Swimming Club should not turn out a number of competitors who will be able to hold their own against other from any part of the country
27/06/1903	date of incident	safety	river	In response to the death of an 8-year-old boy who drowned: it is a pity that a town of the size of Melksham, and which is growing rapidly, and has so many industries, cannot boast of a proper public bath, where children could bathe in safety, and be taught to swim	Perhaps the authorities will now devote a little time and consideration to the important question of providing a public bath.
10/08/1907	newspaper publish date	swimming and bathing	river	Now with a swimming club, there should be bathing facilities, especially for persons learning to swim	
04/01/1919	newspaper publish date	War Memorial	somewhere in town	Letter to the Editor by J W C Ferrebee, Secretary and Treasurer Melksham Swimming Club: Suggests a public war memorial to honour those who died or were wounded during WWI for Melksham should take the form of Public Baths. To be covered in the winter and used for meetings, lectures, dancing, gymnasium, etc.	At the time, the only provision for swimming was "Melksham Lido" in Avon with primitive dressing sheds and some diving appliances placed at the bank of the river adjoining Scotland Road. No accommodation for women or younger learner swimmers : too deep and too dangerous.
14/04/1921	meeting date	Avon Sports and Social Club Lido	pool in the river at the rear of Melksham House	J W C Ferrebee request anyone interested in swimming to attend meeting	attention members of Melksham Swimming Club
29/06/1923	newspaper publish date	Melksham Lido	in Avon at end of Scotland road	Spencer's Aquatic Section improved bathing station in Scotland Road: concrete paths laid round various dressing rooms, modern quay edge has been made the whole length of the river frontage; two lawns of substantial size laid where bathers may sun bathe or use a medicine ball. New chute of last year improved. dimensions of backwater reduced and covered	On 3 July, 1935, visitors to gala will be able to see Miss Cecilia Couzens, champion diver of England, who will give an exhibition
22/07/1932	opening day	Avon Sports and Social Club Lido	pool in the river at the rear of Melksham House	Grand opening. Mixed swimming introduced; now open 7 days a week; properly organised swimming club	swimming costumes must be worn, changing room huts
12/08/1935	date of letter	bathing place	somewhere in the area	Letter to the Editor by "Deep End": concerned about reports of drownings; stressing a bathing place is needed in the area; mentions George Ward seems to be the only one pushing for it	
20/08/1935	date of letter	Spencers Lido	in Avon at end of Scotland road	Letter to the Editor responding to "Deep End" by Reginald W Throwbridge, Hon Secretary Aquatic Section Spencers Sports Club: For 10 years now, maintained a bathing and boating station at Scotland Road	30-40 children each year taught to swim; membership fee nominal, around 150 members (Personally, I don't think Throwbridge understood the point of Deep End's letter.)
15/09/1936	public debate	swimming pool	meeting at New Hall, Market Place	George Ward, Urban District Council, argues that Melksham needs its own pool and not one that's in a river on the town side of Avon Bridge; realised it may be in opposition to Ratepayers, but with increasing population, there may not be a need to raise rate to obtain the funds; prefers pool to be placed at King George V Playing field; river Melksham Lido had been condemned by medical officer some time ago	In the past, Major Fuller offered to sell 17.5 acres of land near Melksham House, but offer turned down because they could not find £200 to build a roadway. Suggestion that Mr Fuller be re-approached about offer. Postal ballot to be sent out to get rate payers reaction to pool idea
14/11/1936	newspaper publish date	swimming pool	proposed somewhere in Melksham	Results of postcard ballot: 67 in favour; 87 against. Total received 154; a few spoilt	returns noted as being disappointing and voting cannot be taken as an official opinion of the Association as a whole

Timeline of Swimming Facilities in Melksham

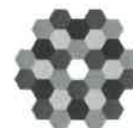
12/04/1937	meeting date	swimming pool	somewhere in Melksham	No provision has been made in the current budget for a public recreation ground or swimming pool, about which much has been said and written in recent months.	the prospect of a swimming pool will not be forgotten, but when circumstances permit, full and generous consideration would be given
02/07/1938	gala date	Spencers Lido	in Avon at end of Scotland road	photos of Rover Scouts enjoying Spencer-Swimming Pool at swimming rally	
08/05/1945	correct year	Spencers Lido	in Avon at end of Scotland road	Spencer's pool closed to public since end of WWII	
01/01/1949	correct year	proposed open-air swimming pool	King George's Field, near Avon Factory	Melksham Urban District Council surveyor's sketch [412036]	proposed swimming pool that was never built
12/03/1952	meeting date	Spencers Lido	in Avon at end of Scotland road	Strong possibility that River Avon bathing station of Messrs Spencer may be reopened this year, stated in meeting at Sports Club. It's been closed since the end of the war (8/5/1945).	marked improvement shown in recent river analysis
06/09/1952	newspaper publish date	swimming pool	somewhere in Melksham	Melksham Urban district Council carnival float tableau reminds spectators the carnival was in aid of the town's Swimming Pool Fund	"Please contribute generously" - bring the seaside to Melksham
29/03/1954	meeting date	swimming pool	somewhere in Melksham	F B Day, Chairman of Urban District Council, calls public meeting to discuss fundraising for swimming pool	also to hear a report of the Fund Raising Committee
22/09/1954	event date	swimming pool	somewhere in Melksham	Whist Drive held in Assembly Hall in aid of the Swimming Pool.	fund-raising
10/02/1955	date of letter	swimming pool	somewhere central in Melksham	Letter to the Editor by J H Marti: Development plan must be accepted; it will be possible to have the long-wanted swimming pool, and in a central position.	from a diagram in another article he wrote, it appears he was using the pond by Melksham House as the swimming pool location
27/06/1955	meeting date	swimming pool	somewhere in King Georges Playing Field	Two sites found for swimming pool, children's paddling pool plans going ahead and should be complete by next summer	once they have a definite site, it would give an added incentive to raise money for it
30/07/1955	newspaper publish date	swimming pool	King George Field, by north-eastern boundary	Site for swimming pool fixed at King George Field at north-eastern boundary (where skate park is now)	since site is fixed, now time to start fund raising efforts - A J Mortimer
06/08/1955	newspaper publish date	Melksham Lido	Lowbourne House	Letter to the Editor, A G Dodimead: River polluted and councillors warn summer bathers not to swim there. Writer asks if councillors won't find source, and no one gets far with a pool scheme, why not take Dr Rumbold's Lowbourne House and turn that into a park?	all talk and not action
15/10/1955	newspaper publish date	swimming pool	somewhere in town	Letter to the Editor from Francis Day: questions sincerity of fundraising for new pool by Mr Greenman, Secretary of the Swimming Pool Fund Raising Committee	the only group showing interest in raising money is Carnival Committee
28/04/1956	newspaper publish date	paddling pool	King George Field	Tender accepted of Messrs A Mortimer & Sons of £728 10s 6d for construction of children's paddling pool	
02/06/1956	newspaper publish date	paddling pool	King George Field	Contracts for erection of park shelter and paddling pool said to be proceeding satisfactorily	
07/07/1956	newspaper publish date	paddling pool	King George Field	Photo of children splashing in new paddling pool	not grand opening but near to opening date
14/07/1956	newspaper publish date	paddling pool	King George Field	Paddling pool polluted after only three days of use	Council authorises Sanitary Inspector to treat the water and purchase testing equipment; council to approach various district schools for their co-operation in preventing misuse of the pool
14/11/1956	meeting date	bathing pool	somewhere in town	Trades Council requests Melksham Urban Council examine possibilities of providing a bathing pool for the town, using direct labour methods; spec suggested by Edmund Aldridge estimated to cost £801 16s	"This is not an attempt to embarrass the Council in any way; it is an idea for obtaining a pool for this town by a different method, one which we believe has not been considered before."

Timeline of Swimming Facilities in Melksham

20/12/1956	meeting date	swimming pool	somewhere in town	A.J Mortimer, Chairman of Melksham Urban Council announced at meeting that a further £175 had been received for the Swimming Pool Fund as a result of the 1956 carnival, bringing total to £2,199 13s.	Although not as high as previous year, Council pleased with respectable sum
01/01/1959	correct year	social club		Melksham Amateur Swimming Club formed in 1959	
24/02/1959	conveyance date	land	Market Place (current site of BP)	conveyance of the land in this title made between the Avon India Rubber Company Limited and The Urban District Council of Melksham for £10	contains restrictive covenants; possibly having to do with the roof mentioned in 1985
13/06/1959	opening gala	Blue Pool	Market Place (current site of BP)	Blue Pool grand opening; Smith & Lacy, Ltd, of Corsham, were the contractors; the pumps, chlorinator and filter were provided by Gilliam & Co of Length - 33 1/3 metres Width - 35 feet Depth - 3 feet, 6 inches to 7 feet, 6 inches Within the first eight weeks, more than 25,000 people paid admission, which totalled £1,570.	Messrs Avon India Rubber Co Ltd made the site available for a nominal fee; with the help of Councillor A J Mortimer (Chairman), the Melksham Carnival Committee raised £5,011 in funds; and the purchase was made complete by the Melksham Urban District Council; pictures [475760] and [161527] shows diving board and life guard seat at far end, and slide at close end, with shallow fountain in front of pool, changing rooms on the left
24/07/1962	gala date	Blue Pool	Market Place (current site of BP)	photo of swimmer Jennifer Jones winning senior girls breast-stroke at Shurnhold School annual gala at Blue Pool	seems to be random leisure photo
22/02/1966	meeting date	swimming club		Melksham Amateur Swimming Club formed in 1959 are to carry on despite recent fears that they would have to wind up through lack of support. Meeting only attended by 17 people.	Urban Council charges £31 10s for use of pool or 36s a night. On a public night the council probably takes six times less than on our club nights.
27/06/1975	newspaper publish date	Blue Pool	Market Place (current site of BP)	Photo of family enjoying Blue Pool outdoors in summer sun	seems to be random leisure photo
01/01/1979	correct year	Blue Pool	Market Place (current site of BP)	Photo by Tony Seager [586052]	photo shows diving board and life guard seat at far end; no slide, but in/out ladders at all four corners; fountain replaced by shallow pool; dressing rooms as before
06/07/1979	newspaper publish date	leisure centres	various	West sports centres confessed today that they are losing a fortune. The biggest drain on cash are the swimming pools. Experts estimate that it would cost nearly £2 a swim to make a profit. Spiralling heating costs are now threatening to kill off centres, which are often a town's community focal spot.	Melksham: the Wiltshire County Council-run centre lost £35,000 last year. "The charges don't match the spending--it's as simple as that," said spokesman Tony Darby. The biggest outlays are £35,000 for staff and £18,000 for heating, light and water. (This is probably Blue Pool and Christie Miller combined)
05/02/1985	newspaper publish date	swimming pool	Market Place (current site of BP)	Town to splash out on new fun pool. West Wiltshire District councillors have set aside £245,000 to turn Melksham's swimming pool into a fun pool for youngsters. Subcommittee chairman Councillor Graham Payne said research showed shallow pools were most popular and pointed out that serious swimmers already stopped using the Blue Pool.	they were criticised for ignoring the wishes of townspeople, who want a more expensive project to include a practice pool for serious swimmers in the scheme. Councillor Ian Drew told the Environmental committee the fun pool with an overall depth of no more than three feet, was useless without another deeper pool. He stated there could be a serious accident with teenagers diving into a shallow pool.
20/02/1985	meeting date	Blue Pool	Market Place (current site of BP)	Plans to turn Melksham swimming pool into a fun pool for youngsters have been sunk. Originally the intension was to make the blue pool into a free form swimming pool on a riverside theme. But instead last night's meeting of West Wiltshire District Council's Environment Committee decided to refurbish the present pool.	A plea by councillor Ian Drew (Lab, Melksham) to deflect the matter for more discussion was turned down.

Timeline of Swimming Facilities in Melksham

17/10/1985	newspaper publish date	new swimming pool	to be built near Avon factory on council-owned King George V playing fields	West Wiltshire district council Councillor Harry Johnson (Conservative Melksham) last night asked a full meeting of the council investigate the feasibility of building a at King George V Playing Fields But council chairman Mrs Mary Pearce (Conservative Trowbridge) moved that the matter should be referred the next meeting of the council environment committee Meeting And councillors agreed suggestion by Melksham Labour councillor Mary Salisbury that any feasibility study should given least three months.	The idea building a pool and using the waste heat that currently pumped into the river was first suggested at a meeting of Melksham town council committee two weeks ago. The plan for a covered pool and outdoor fun area had been forward by the local Chamber Commerce But the scheme had with opposition from town council chairman Mr Maurice O'Gorman because the district council are already considering extensive renovation plans for the town's outdoor Blue Pool
31/10/1985	newspaper publish date	new swimming pool	to be built near Avon factory on council-owned King George V playing fields	Waste heat from Avon Rubber may be used to warm the water in a new swimming pool; could be run cheaply with the waste factory heat, claimed Councillor Harry Johnson. Councillor Maureen Weston said there was a big demand for a covered swimming pool and fun pool for all-year use.	Melksham's present Blue Pool is outdoor and a covenant on the building prevents any proposals to roof it
01/09/1986	month and day correct	swimming pool	Market Place (current site of BP)	Swimming Pool closed for two years for a facelift costing more than half a million pounds.	
27/01/1988	newspaper publish date	Blue Pool	Market Place (current site of BP)	Leisure Centre advert for "Indoor pools at Warminster, Westbury, Bradford-on-Avon, and this summer the new blue pool opening in Melksham. Heated outdoor pool in Trowbridge, Leisure Centre at Castle Place Trowbridge, Sport Centre at Warminster"	indication that there is a roof over Blue Pool
20/04/1988	date of rights granted	deeds	Market Place (current site of BP)	The land is subject to the right granted by a deed made between West Wiltshire District Council and Bailey Employment Service Limited	possibly dealing with right of access?
15/08/1988	opening day	refurbished swimming pool	Market Place (current site of BP)	Former Melksham Mayor Maurice O'Gorman opened the refurbished swimming pool after it had been closed for two years. Then quickly closed it again because 50 swimmers scratched their feet on the bottom of the pool; closed until further notice. Pool had closed in September 1986 for a facelift costing more than half a million pounds.	swimming baths have been plagued by setbacks since they closed for modernisation two years ago; had to shut again only hours after reopening: the problems that delayed the opening turned out to be worse than they thought
15/08/1988	opening day	new swimming pool	Market Place (current site of BP)	Swimmers were celebrating the opening of a new pool today.	Pool, closed since 1986, dogged by delays, will not be completed until October. But West Wiltshire District Council decided to open early for the rest of the school holidays
18/08/1988	planned date	swimming pool	Market Place (current site of BP)	Work on renovating the council swimming pool has been dogged by delays, but closure to be suspended for 2-3 weeks so children can enjoy a dip during school holidays, to make most of good summer weather	
01/04/2001	date of title	transfer	Market Place (current site of BP)	A transfer of the Town Hall, Market Place made between West Wiltshire District Council and Melksham Town Council contains vendors restrictive covenants.	
01/01/2006	month and year correct	addition to locker room	Market Place (current site of BP)	Blue prints prepared by Anthony Boulton & Assoc of Bristol to add two basins to men's facility and four basins to women's facility; also a total of five entrances to these facilities	instead, two basins and two urinals in men's installed; two basins and one toilet for the women's. Other than this, the Blue Pool remains almost exactly as the 2006 blue prints indicate
01/04/2009	date of council change	transfer	all	The new unitary authority, Wiltshire Council, comes into being. Wiltshire County Council, Kennet District Council, North Wilts District Council, Salisbury District Council and West Wilts District Council cease to exist	
14/05/2009	title	title	Market Place (current site of BP)	Proprietor: Wiltshire Council per Land Registry	



Official copy of register of title

Title number WT275105

Edition date 15.05.2009

- This official copy shows the entries on the register of title on 01 JUN 2023 at 12:29:46.
- This date must be quoted as the "search from date" in any official search application based on this copy.
- The date at the beginning of an entry is the date on which the entry was made in the register.
- Issued on 01 Jun 2023.
- Under s.67 of the Land Registration Act 2002, this copy is admissible in evidence to the same extent as the original.
- This title is dealt with by HM Land Registry, Weymouth Office.

A: Property Register

This register describes the land and estate comprised in the title.

WILTSHIRE

- 1 (02.10.2008) The Freehold land shown edged with red on the plan of the above title filed at the Registry and being Melksham Blue Pool, Market Place, Melksham (SN12 6ES).
- 2 (02.10.2008) The land has the benefit of the rights reserved by but is subject to the rights granted by the Transfer dated 1 April 2001 referred to in the Charges Register.

B: Proprietorship Register

This register specifies the class of title and identifies the owner. It contains any entries that affect the right of disposal.

Title absolute

- 1 (14.05.2009) PROPRIETOR: WILTSHIRE COUNCIL of Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 8JN and of DX116892, Trowbridge 3.

C: Charges Register

This register contains any charges and other matters that affect the land.

- 1 (02.10.2008) A Conveyance of the land in this title dated 24 February 1959 made between (1) The Avon India Rubber Company Limited and (2) The Urban District Council Of Melksham contains restrictive covenants.
NOTE: Copy filed.
- 2 (02.10.2008) The land is subject to the rights granted by a Deed dated 20 April 1988 made between (1) West Wiltshire District Council and (2) Bailey Employment Services Limited .
NOTE: Copy filed.
- 3 (02.10.2008) A Transfer of the Town Hall, Market Place dated 1 April

Title number WT275105

C: Charges Register continued

2001 made between (1) West Wiltshire District Council and (2) Melksham Town Council contains vendors restrictive covenants.

NOTE:-Copy filed under WT201248.

End of register

These are the notes referred to on the following official copy

The electronic official copy of the title plan follows this message.

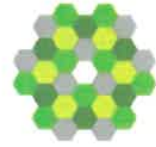
Please note that this is the only official copy we will issue. We will not issue a paper official copy.

This official copy was delivered electronically and when printed will not be to scale. You can obtain a paper official copy by ordering one from HM Land Registry.

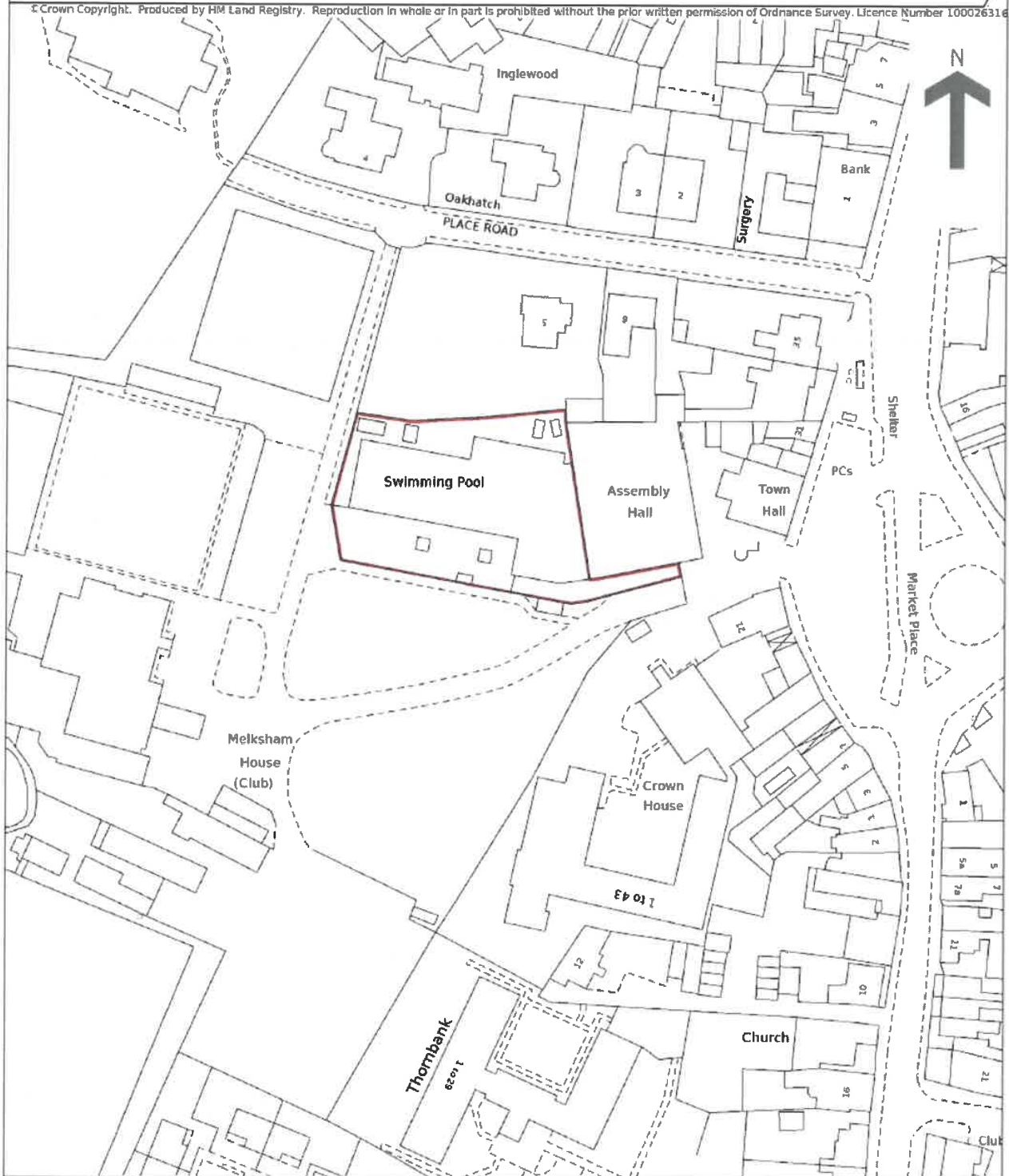
This official copy is issued on 01 June 2023 shows the state of this title plan on 01 June 2023 at 12:29:46. It is admissible in evidence to the same extent as the original (s.67 Land Registration Act 2002). This title plan shows the general position, not the exact line, of the boundaries. It may be subject to distortions in scale. Measurements scaled from this plan may not match measurements between the same points on the ground. This title is dealt with by the HM Land Registry, Weymouth Office .

HM Land Registry
Official copy of
title plan

Title number **WT275105**
Ordnance Survey map reference **ST9063NW**
Scale **1:1250 enlarged from 1:2500**
Administrative area **Wiltshire**



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APPENDIX D

Blue Pool – review of discussions and decisions

26th June 2023 – Full Council

On 5 June 2023 the Asset Management and Amenities Committee discussed a proposal from Councillor Ellis and resolved as follows.

Minute 163/23.

That the town council register its interest in the Blue Pool site with Wiltshire Council, establish a timeline and find out whether any potential procurement would be pre or post demolition, enquire about access to the site from the Campus end of the site. Interest registered. Town Clerk met with Mike Dawson Head of Estates. Town Clerk requested a valuation and terms of procurement. (received today 7.9.2023) Procurement would be pre demolition, access form the Campus not possible.

That the Assembly Hall Working Group Terms of reference are amended at the next Full Council meeting which will enable input from volunteers in the community on potential proposals for the site which will include the Town Hall, 31 Market Place and the Art House Cafe. Actioned at a subsequent council meeting.

That the Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall are asked to come up with proposals. Presentation made on 17 July Council meeting.

That the matter be referred to Full Council to decide on the remit of the working group.

Current terms of reference are attached.

A further proposal has now been received from Councillor Ellis as follows:

Request to Full Council to reconfigure the Assembly Hall Working Group, with members of the Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall, into a working group of the full council to investigate and progress the future of the Assembly Hall, the linked building currently the Blue Pool and the immediate surrounds bordering the Campus.

Next steps:

1. Authorise the Assembly Hall Working Group, to comprise current members and representatives of the Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall and museum and hub interests, to investigate the possible further with a structural survey leading to an outline business case and costing. We would request a budget of around £5000 for this initial professional work. The group will also be informed by the needs assessment, Cluster 1 research by the neighbourhood plan team, and further user and community interaction.
2. To gain access for members of FoMAH and AHWG already involved to the Blue Pool to help the team evaluate the possible and to get a measure of the building and opportunities so that we can fill in the details
3. To progress liaison with Wiltshire Council concerning the transfer of the Blue Pool to the ownership of the Town Council should an agreement be reached between the parties and that to be fitting with the strategic plans of the Town Council.
4. To allow these groups concerned to meet within the Assembly Hall or other available Town council rooms to progress their work, with internal accounting to cover the costs thereof as with other working groups.

The outcomes from the above will be a feasibility report to full council. Should the group consider option(s) practical and recommendable, it will include a road map to decide and progress the project looking at the ultimate use / needs for Melksham and how we would get there and provide an affordable and sustainable set of facilities into the future, looking ahead at the next 15 years.

A meeting of AHWG/FoMAH is proposed for the evening of Tuesday 4th July (or 5th if better) with ... [view the full agenda text for item 544/23](#)

Additional documents:

- [BluePoolAssemblyHall, 05/06/2023 Asset Management and Amenities Committee , item 544/23](#) PDF 307 KB
- [Assembly Hall WG Amended Terms of Reference with Track Changes following FC 03.10.2022 , item 544/23](#) PDF 147 KB

Minutes:

Councillor Ellis set out the details of his proposal. There was general support for the proposal but some concern over the make-up and voting rights of the working group. It was suggested that the Working Group be open to all councillors and that members of the public be invited to give input. There was discussion of the scope of the project, Wiltshire Council's position on the Blue Pool and the remit of the Working Group, with some feeling the options outlined were too narrow. Some amendments were suggested and accepted by Councillor Ellis as friendly amendments

The 10pm cut off was reached during the discussions. It was proposed by the Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell, seconded by Councillor Oatley, and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to suspend Standing Orders and extend the meeting by a further 15 minutes.

It was proposed by Councillor Ellis, seconded by Councillor Goodhind, and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

- that the Assembly Hall Working Group (AHWG) Terms of Reference be amended so the group sits under the Full Council and not Asset and Amenities Committee.
- That the AHWG would be open to all council members, with a quorum of 5 elected members.
- That, within a time limit of three months, the AHWG will consider at least 3 options including but not limited to Repurpose, Redevelop and Do Not Take Project On.
- That the AHWG will explore and provide "Ball Park Figures".
- That a budget of £10000 be allocated from The Major Projects Earmarked Reserves for professional fees.

17th July – Full Council Meeting

To receive a presentation from the Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall.

Minutes:

Councillor Ellis gave a presentation on work he had undertaken with the Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall.

Following this Councillor Alford felt that this project was to be considered by the Full Council working group of the Assembly Hall and this has missed out any connection with the town council. It is great to see ideas for the project but as a town council we have not followed the proper process.

Questions were asked about getting the views of an architect, quantity surveyor or structural engineer and which order that should be in. Why was a quantity surveyor chosen?

There was a feeling that officers had not moved quickly enough to set up working group meeting.

It was proposed by Councillor Ellis, seconded Councillor Alford and

RESOLVED that a meeting of the Full Council working group be set up immediately which would include the Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall.

Councillor Aves left the meeting at 9.30pm

Standing Orders were suspended at 9.31pm to enable members of Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall to comment.

Q. Can the town council obtain ownership of the Blue Pool? – A. Yes.

Q. MS felt that this is a proposal is very well put together. Councillors haven't got a good track record for getting things done and why can't we get on with it?

A. the original motion put in place by the council was to have a working group meeting take place to discuss options, we can't delegate responsibility to others outside the council.

Overall, the 'Friends of' felt that more urgency should be given to the project

24th July Assembly Hall Working Group notes (the Assembly Hall Working Group has a membership consisting of all councillors)

NB: *Although the notes suggest resolutions and therefore decisions they can only be recommendations to full council. Below the resolution agreed at the meeting annotated with update in red.*

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

- that the Assembly Hall Working Group (AHWG) Terms of Reference be amended so the group sits under the Full Council and not Asset and Amenities Committee. **Completed**
- That the AHWG would be open to all council members, with a quorum of 5 elected members. **Done.**
- That, within a time limit of three months, the AHWG will consider at least 3 options including but not limited to Repurpose, Redevelop and Do Not Take Project On.
- That the AHWG will explore and provide "Ball Park Figures".
- That a budget of £10000 be allocated from The Major Projects Earmarked Reserves for professional fees.

27th July 2023

Town Clerk met with Mark Saint of MEA (A project management, quantity surveying firm)

- The suggested course of action and advice: To establish ownership of the Blue Pool Site, the Assembly Hall Site
- To find out whether the closure and demolition of the Blue Pool was in Wiltshire Council's campus (or other) budget

- Establish possible initial heads of terms with Wiltshire Council for transferring Blue Pool to MTC. Would it come with a capital contribution?
- Consider conducting a design competition with architects. Brief to include a summary of ownerships, opportunities and ideas. Competition winner(s) and runner(s) up should be remunerated if not guaranteed to be retained for project delivery (which is likely to be the case)
- Also, to include Melksham's history, its demographics, what MTC is responsible for and everything within MTC's ownership
- Consider making Use of RIBA to conduct the competition, compilation of the brief with assistance from MEA (Mark to submit a fee proposal if approved). See attached RIBA publication. Note RIBA charge for this approach. Details attached and brief below.
- An Open Ideas approach seems to be the route needed for this opportunity. If the town council were minded to follow this route, RIBA can be approached for an initial no commitment proposal which will inform their costs and also the recommended level of 'prize money'.
-

What are the different types of competition?

Competitions can produce projects of exceptional imagination and quality, and there are a number of different competition types available.

- When design is the key factor to the decision making, the competition is known as an **Open Design competition**
- When a competition is held to find the right designer or design team it is known as a **Competitive Interview**
- Many competitions are a combination of the two, either a two phase **Invited Design Competition** with an open application at the first phase and a design requirement in the second or **Private Invitation** in which only a select list of teams are invited to participate from the outset
- **Open Ideas competitions (single phase or over two phases) are where concept designs are submitted and there is no commitment to proceed beyond the competition and the winner and runners up are awarded prize money**

The first and most important decision to make is which is the most suitable route for your requirements.

The advantages of the classic **design competition** are the involvement of the widest possible range of teams and the encouragement of innovation.

The advantage of a **competitive interview or invited design**, where meeting the team is an important element, is that it allows some creative dialogue between architect and client during the process.

17th August 2023 – Extraordinary Council Meeting

It was proposed by Councillor Rabey, seconded by Councillor Westbrook and

RESOLVED to speak to the contractors who had quoted to obtain quotes for bare minimum patching requirements over differing lengths of time.

It was proposed by The Deputy Mayor and Chair of the meeting Councillor Price, seconded by Councillor Rabey, and

RESOLVED to spend up to £10000 to get a Structural Engineer to analyse the future feasibility of the Assembly Hall and The Blue Pool and come back with their findings as soon as possible.

A structural engineer has been engaged by the Head of Operations in line with the extraordinary council meeting decision held on 17th August – meeting arranged for Tuesday 13th September.

The structural engineer has done an initial visit and is arranging to do a more detailed inspection date to be confirmed.

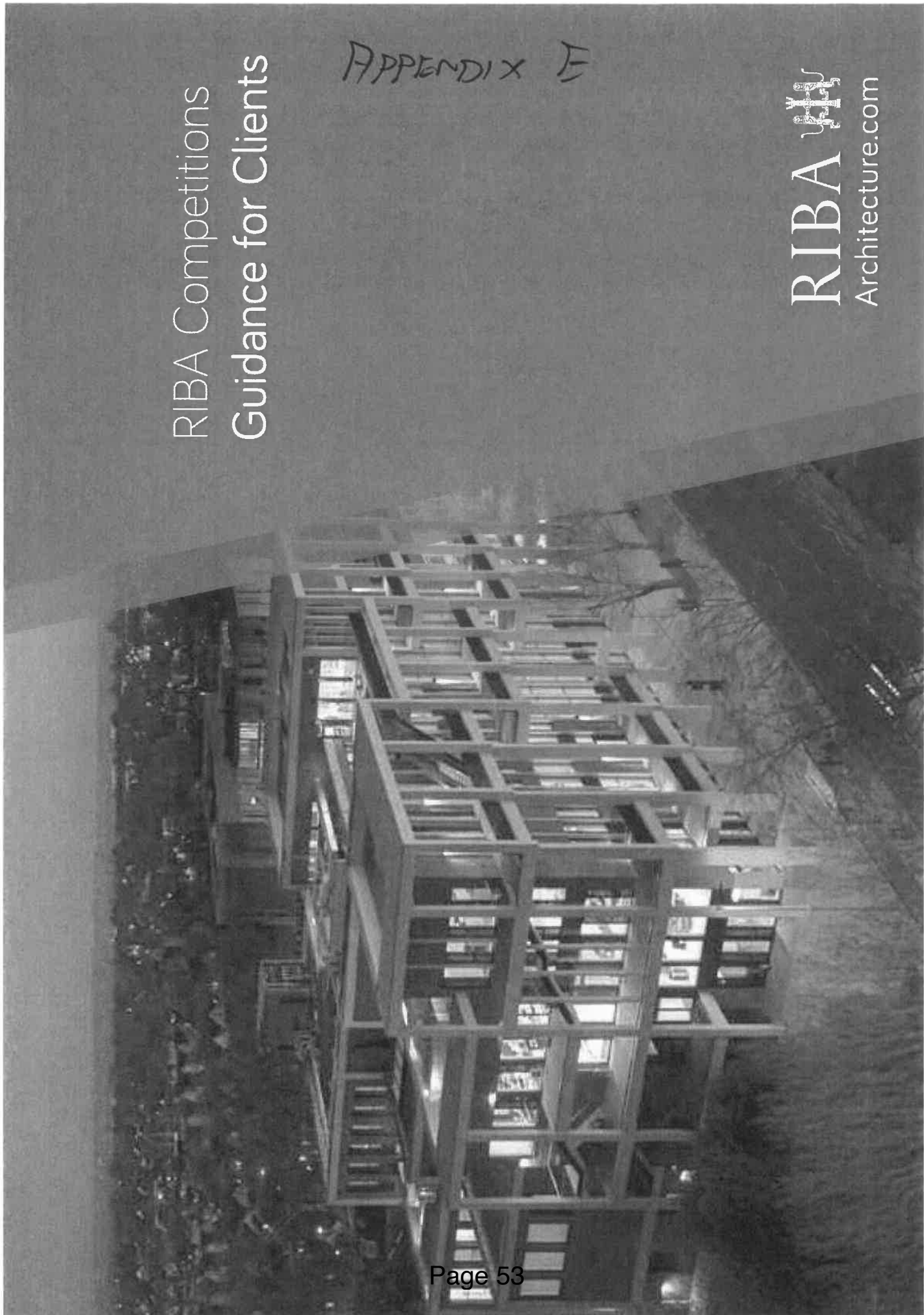
Roofing contractors have been approached to give an opinion on a phased approach to patching the Assembly Hall roof. One contractor has visited the site two further contractors are to be found.

Awaiting quotations from 2 roofing contractors.

RIBA Competitions
Guidance for Clients

APPENDIX E

RIBA 
Architecture.com





**New Town House Building
Stirling Prize Winner 2021**

“Kingston University have used the RIBA Competitions service twice – the first time for the Stirling Prize and EU Mies van der Rohe Award-winning Town House, and most recently for our proposed Middle Mill Building for Kingston School of Art. We feel that using RIBA Competitions is a strong indicator of the value we place on excellent design and its potential to transform the experience of engaging with a building. The RIBA Competitions team brings a wealth of experience and really understands the implications of choosing this procurement path for a design team in the higher education sector.”

Sean Woulfe
Director of Estates and Sustainability
Kingston University

Foreword

Architectural design competitions have a long and illustrious history. The Houses of Parliament in London, the Palais Garnier Opera House in Paris and even the RIBA's own London Head Quarters in Portland Place, all originated as design competitions.

The RIBA has supported the principle of architectural competitions since 1871 and our dedicated team of Competition specialists have over 80 years combined experience of the competitions process. We are the UK's most widely recognised provider of competition services with the expertise and experience to support clients throughout the process from setting up the competition through to selection of a winner.

This document aims to provide some initial guidance to anyone who is considering holding a design competition. It is illustrated throughout with examples of buildings, structures and public realm projects all of which have originated through the RIBA competitions process.

Often these projects, once realised, go on to become national or international Award winners which demonstrates the ability of a competition in facilitating design excellence.

Recent projects that have become RIBA Stirling Prize winners include Goldsmith Street Housing Development, Norwich in 2019 and Kingston University Town House, London in 2021. The Town House also won the prestigious EU Prize for Contemporary Architecture - Mies van der Rohe Award in 2022.

Karen Beamish
Executive Director
RIBA

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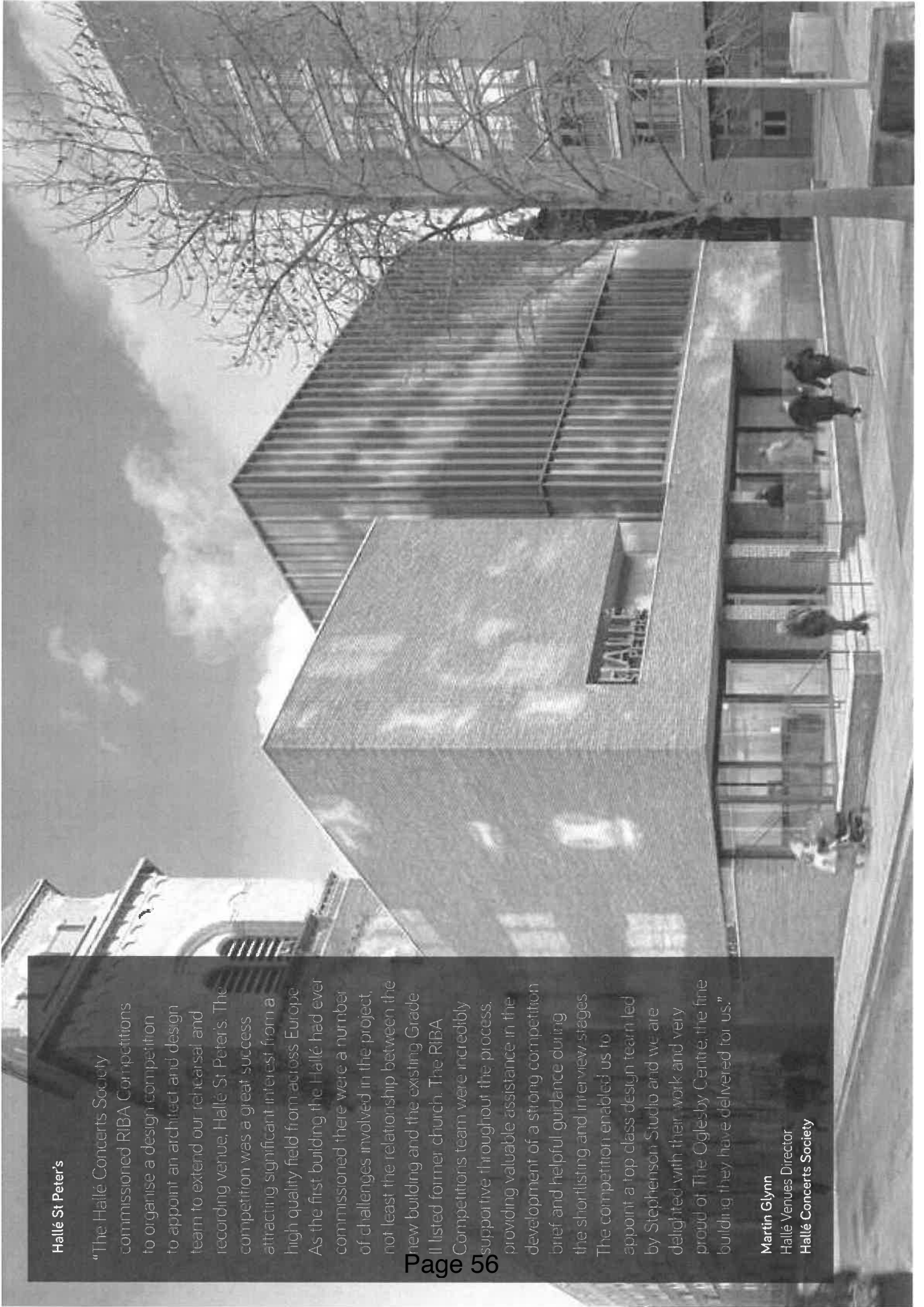
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Why hold a design competition?	7
The advantages of a competition	9
What are the different types of competition?	10
Public Procurement routes	14
Achieving the desired outcome	16
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How to find out more and Contact Us	26

Hallé St Peter's

"The Hallé Concerts Society commissioned RIBA Competitions to organise a design competition to appoint an architect and design team to extend our rehearsal and recording venue, Hallé St Peter's. The competition was a great success attracting significant interest from a high quality field from across Europe. As the first building the Hallé had ever commissioned there were a number of challenges involved in the project, not least the relationship between the new building and the existing Grade II listed former church. The RIBA

Competitions team were incredibly supportive throughout the process, providing valuable assistance in the development of a strong competition brief and helpful guidance during the shortlisting and interview stages. The competition enabled us to appoint a top class design team led by Stephenson Studio and we are delighted with their work and very proud of The Oglesby Centre, the fine building they have delivered for us."

Martin Glynn
Hallé Venues Director
Hallé Concerts Society



Introduction

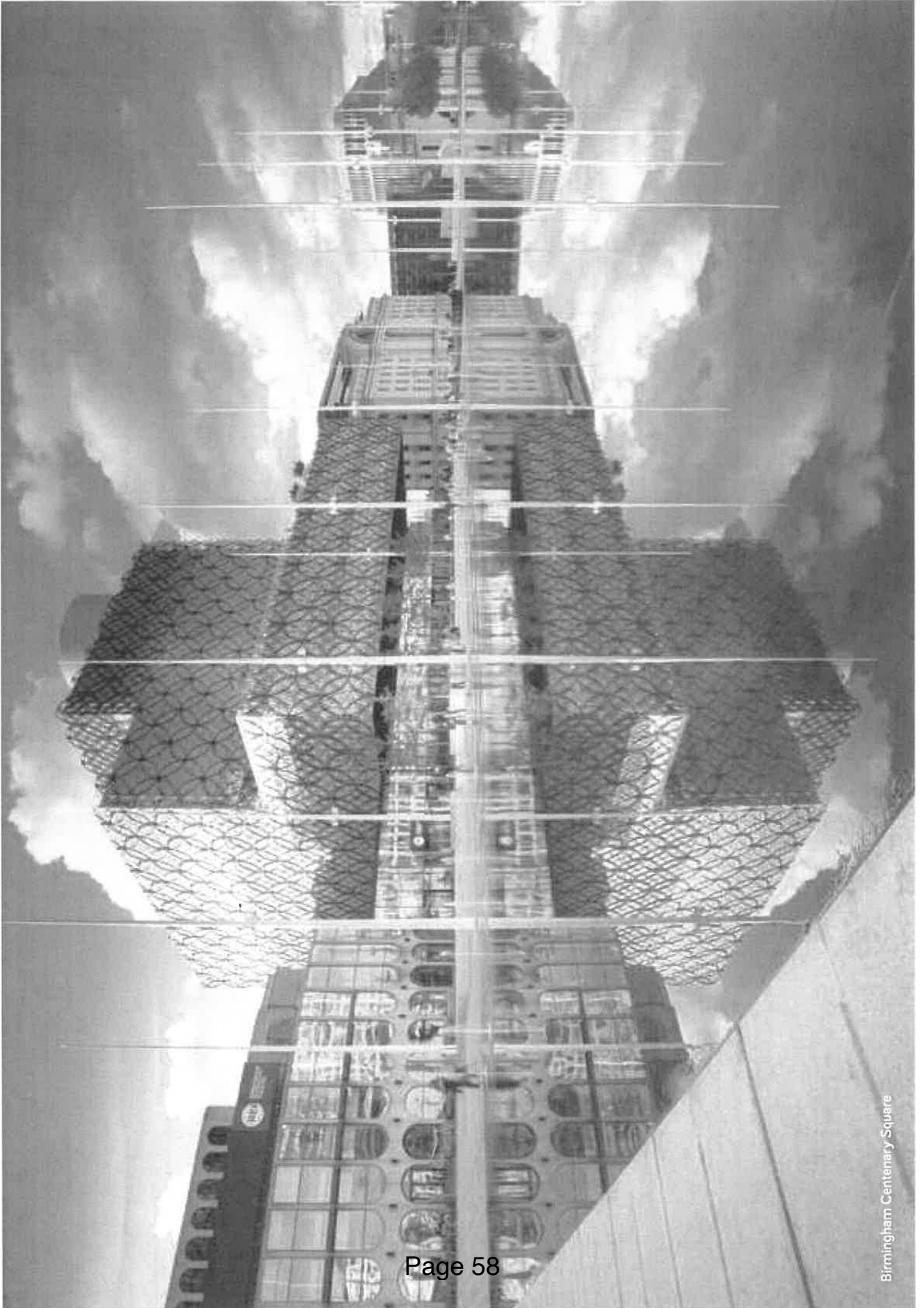
It is well known that good design is invaluable and can bring both immediate and lasting benefits helping improve and enrich people's lives. A positive client-architect relationship, where client aims and aspirations are well communicated, clearly understood and mutually aligned with their architect, is critical in maximising the potential of any project and the use of an architectural design competition can be an excellent starting point.

This guidance document is for anyone who is looking to select an architect, design team or a design solution through a competitive selection process. It sets out the different options available to help clients decide which type of competition is most likely to best meet their objectives.

We provide a range of support to clients looking to appoint an architect and if you are considering a competition, our dedicated team offers a competition management service and can bring a wealth of knowledge, advice and expertise to each competition. We will guide you through the process to ensure that each competition is tailored to meet your aims and objectives.

Competitions can be suitable for a whole range of projects in the public and private sectors such as:

- **urban planning and masterplanning**
- **new buildings and engineering structures**
- **redevelopment and refurbishment works**
- **landscape and public realm schemes**



Why hold a design competition?

The appointment of a design professional is the single most important task when undertaking a project in the built environment. Finding a suitable designer, even for a small private project, is a priority from an early stage.

A design competition is a highly successful procurement model that delivers exciting buildings, structure or public realm projects, drives up design quality, stimulates creativity and innovation and generates a wide range of ideas improving the choice for clients.

A competition based on evaluating the relative merits of several designers can give a client the best opportunity to make an informed selection.

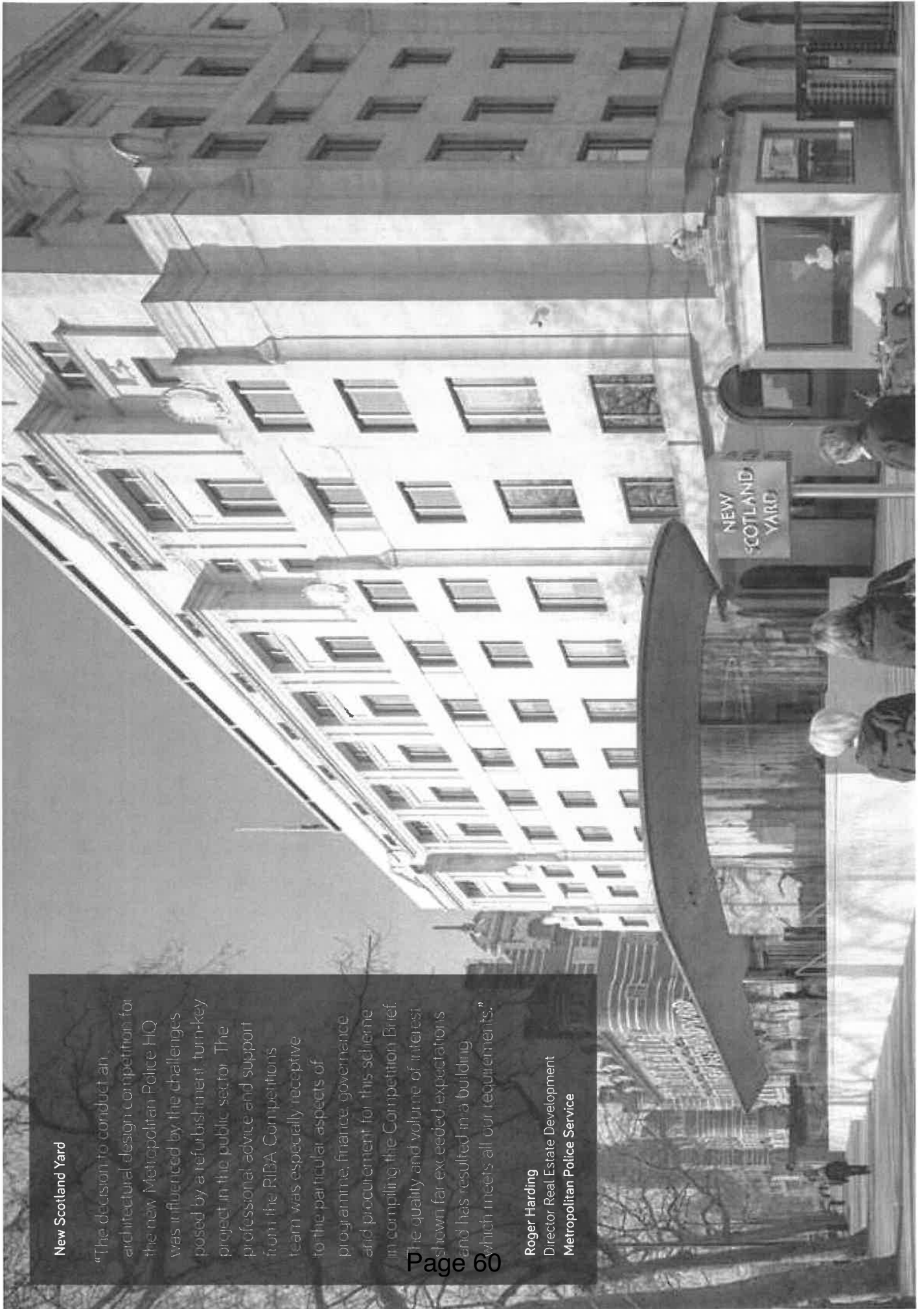
“When redeveloping Centenary Square (one of Birmingham’s most iconic public squares), we needed a design that would stand out on the international stage. We were delighted when the RIBA design competition attracted 185 entries from 32 different countries. Working with RIBA Competitions, we had access to designers throughout the world. The professional support and advice given, as we set up the website and managed the competition, was invaluable. The completed Square stands as a testament to all involved. Birmingham has a Square that they are proud of.”

Jim Wilson
Project Delivery Manager
Birmingham City Council

New Scotland Yard

"The decision to conduct an architectural design competition for the new Metropolitan Police HQ was influenced by the challenges posed by a refurbishment, turn-key project in the public sector. The professional advice and support from the RIBA Competitions team was especially receptive to the particular aspects of programme, finance, governance and procurement for this scheme in compiling the Competition Brief. The quality and volume of interest shown far exceeded expectations and has resulted in a building which meets all our requirements."

Roger Harding
Director Real Estate Development
Metropolitan Police Service



The advantages of a competition

Competitions have a reputation for generating the best range of design options to choose from and at a fraction of the total construction cost of a scheme.

Drive innovation, stimulate creativity and generate a range of new ideas

Design professionals competing against one another is one of the principal advantages of a competition over other procurement routes.

Deliver more choice

Competitions offer the unique opportunity of simultaneously exploring a range of approaches in response to the same brief, allowing a client to compare entrants' creativity, understanding of the project requirements and problem-solving abilities.

Deliver value

A well-run competition is an efficient, auditable and transparent selection process. The benefits of a successful competition can far outweigh the initial investment and deliver real value for money.

Find the right team for the job

When consultants from different disciplines work together on a submission it has the added benefit of forging strong design team collaborations.

Attract fresh talent

Competitions bring design talent to the attention of the client. This could include up and coming designers as well as more established practices not known for working in a particular sector.

Achieve high quality design

An investment upfront to achieve high quality design can be more cost effective when considering the life cycle costs of a project. A competition demonstrates a commitment to high quality design whether publicly or privately funded. They can also drive neighbourhood, city or regional improvements in both civic environments and public spaces.

Engage with the community and key stakeholders

A physical or digital exhibition of competition entries can be an excellent way of involving the local community or key stakeholders and gathering feedback.

Raise awareness

Competitions can generate significant publicity, raising the profile of the client and the project. They provide a useful promotional platform to help fire the public imagination, often attracting significant media interest.

What are the different types of competition?

Competitions can produce projects of exceptional imagination and vitality and there are a number of different competition types available:

- When design is the key factor to the decision making, the competition is known as an **Open Design competition**.
- When a competition is held to find the right designer or design team it is known as a **Competitive Interview**.
- Many competitions are a combination of the two, either a two phase **Invited Design Competition** with an open application at the first phase and a design requirement in the second or **Private Invitation** in which only a select list of teams are invited to participate from the outset.
- **Open Ideas competitions** (single phase or over two phases), are where concept designs are submitted and there is no commitment to proceed beyond the competition and the winner and runners up are awarded prize money.

The first and most important decision to make is which is the most suitable route for your requirements.

The advantages of the classic '**design competition**' are the involvement of the widest possible range of talents and the encouragement of innovation.

The advantage of a **competitive interview** or **invited design**, where meeting the team is an important element, is that it allows some creative dialogue between architect and client during the process.

Open Design and Open Ideas Competitions

Open Design and Open Ideas Competitions allow a client to receive a wide variety of design solutions in response to a project brief, with the potential to generate fresh, exciting and innovative designs.

They involve an anonymous initial design phase, from which a winner can be selected (single phase). Alternatively, there could be a second phase where anonymity is lifted and shortlisted teams are invited to develop their design approaches and/or present them at interview.

The Open Design format should ideally lead to the winning team being commissioned for a project, with the Client selecting a concept design and the team to deliver it. Clients may require designers with more limited experience to team-up with another practice to ensure delivery of the project.

Competitive Interviews

Competitive Interviews are predominantly used to select a designer or team at the very early stages of a project. They can be the preferred choice where the client needs help in defining the project and the details need developing in conjunction with the right design team.

Competitive Interviews generally have an open expression of interest phase with designers submitting examples of previous work and relevant experience in response to a briefing document and/or a Selection Questionnaire.

Shortlisted designers are then invited to outline their initial thoughts, understanding of the project requirements and possible approach at interview, before a winner is selected.

This process enables the client and the designer to evolve the design solution together. It is particularly useful in projects of a complex and sensitive nature and can also ensure that the working relationship is right. It can have a shorter time frame than other competition processes and can be more cost effective as detailed design proposals aren't required.

The Open Ideas process does not carry any commitment beyond the competition stage. This might be the preferred route if the client wishes to encourage blue sky thinking and they are not planning to appoint the winning designer.

These processes can attract extensive trade, regional, national and international publicity and can generate a significant number of entries – for example, previous RIBA Competitions have attracted anything between 30 and 250 entries.

Invited Design Competitions

Invited Design Competitions generally involve an open expression of interest and application phase, where entrants are required to demonstrate track record and experience of delivering relevant or similar projects in response to a briefing document and/or a Selection Questionnaire.

From the initial applications a shortlist of typically up to five practices are selected and invited to prepare design proposals in response to a project brief. This ensures those who are invited to take part in the design phase have the experience, expertise and track record to deliver the project, this can provide reassurance in terms of an entrant's experience in delivery particularly where the project requires specialist knowledge. This type of competition commonly concludes with an interview with the evaluation panel before the selection of the winner.

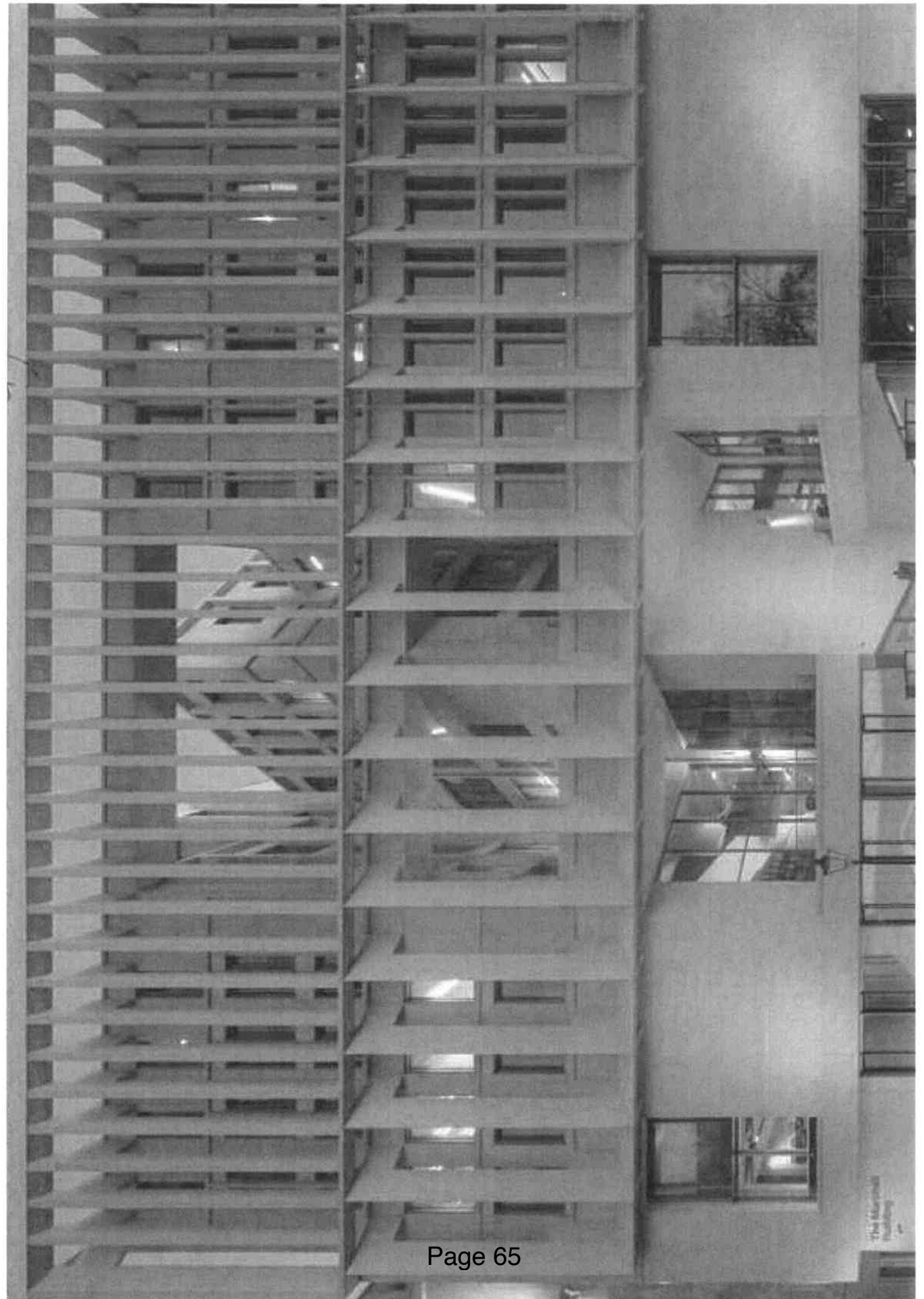
Private Invitation Design Competitions

Alternatively for the private sector, some clients may consider a Private Invitation Competition where a set number of designers, between 10 – 25 are approached directly to participate in the competition. The process then follows that of the Invited Design Competition until a winner is selected.

The Marshall Building
London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)

“The LSE is an advocate of the RIBA design competition process. The LSE is a world renowned university and the RIBA competition has a similar worldwide reach. Our competition process is crucial in allowing us to secure seminal pieces of architecture that support the student experience and campus development. The competition process allows us to undertake a selection process that is open and balanced and generates shortlists of creative and fascinating practices generating truly wonderful ideas and brief responses. The resulting building deliveries have rarely differed substantially from the competition outputs in the six-to-eight weeks timescale of the design phase.”

Kenneth Kinsella
Director of Capital Development
London School of Economics and Political Science



Public Procurement routes

If you are required to comply with UK Public Procurement Regulations, you should ensure that your preferred competition route dovetails with one of the regulated procurement procedures as outlined within The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR15), (or if applicable, The Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016) and the equivalent regulations in Scotland. If you are unsure as to whether you need to comply with the Regulations you should seek further legal advice.

The following is a brief outline of the current public procurement options. The most appropriate procedure can be selected to dovetail with the competition formats outlined earlier.

1. Restricted Procedure

A two-stage procedure to award a contract to a designer to develop a design for the project.

Designers are initially required to complete a standard Selection Questionnaire (SQ) which requires designers to provide details of their economic and financial standing, technical and professional ability and relevant experience.

Shortlisted entrants are then required to respond to an Invitation to Tender (ITT) issued by the client, setting out their approach to developing a design. This process can dovetail with the Invited Design process and final clarifications interviews are permissible, but the client cannot enter into negotiation (such as by way of holding design approach workshops) with any of the designers.

2. Competitive Procedure with Negotiation and Competitive Dialogue

The Competitive Procedures should be used for relatively complex projects. Better reserved for contracts where the client knows the desired outcome but is unsure as to the best technical and financial approach to meet their needs or where design and innovative solutions are required.

Similar to the Restricted Procedure, designers are initially required to complete a Selection Questionnaire (SQ). The shortlisted designers submit their initial tenders and then enter into a structured dialogue (Competitive Dialogue) or structured negotiation (Competitive Procedure with Negotiation). The client can introduce design approach workshops as part of the negotiation process and potentially reduce the number of solutions at each stage by applying the published award criteria. This process requires upfront planning and would dovetail with the Invited Design competition process.

3. Design Contest

In an open Design Contest, designers submit their design solutions in response to the client's brief. The designs are assessed anonymously by an evaluation panel and in accordance with the published criteria. Prizes or payments can be awarded to the winner(s) of the Design Contest. The winner(s) will not necessarily be awarded a contract for the project.

The Design Contest (PCRI5) is the only regulated procurement procedure which works successfully with the open design competition format. However, anonymity has to be maintained throughout the process with no scope for interviews, which can sometimes make it not suitable for projects subject to procurement and/or a subsequent procurement phase has to be introduced. There is also a requirement for one-third of the Evaluation panel members to hold an equivalent qualification (e.g., architect) to that being evaluated by the Design Contest.

Following a Design Contest, the client may negotiate and award a service contract to a winner to deliver the project with the works contractor. If there is more than one winner, all winners must be invited to negotiate. The client must make its intention clear in the Contract Notice, if they wish to retain the right to award a negotiated contract to the Design Contest winner.

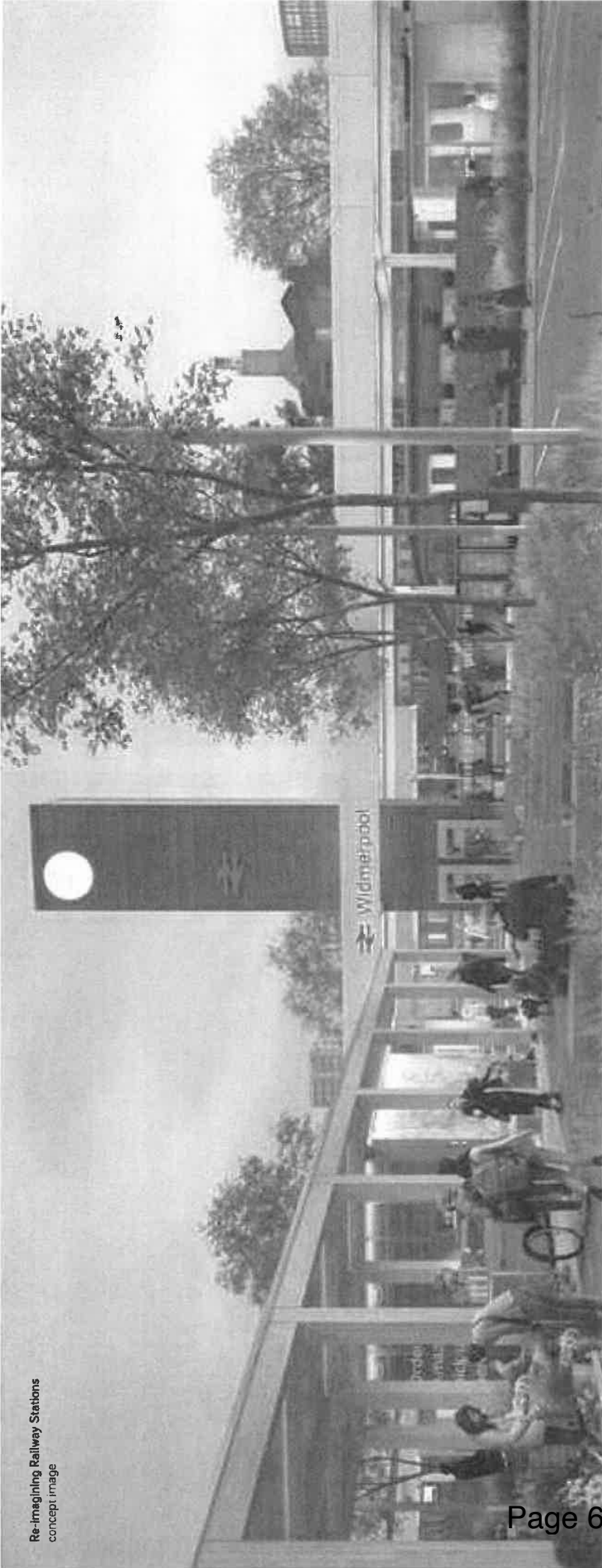
Achieving the desired outcome

A client should not underestimate the resources required to manage and administer a well-executed competition. You will need to commit significant upfront time and money for a successful, value-adding competition outcome. However, the benefit of this is far outweighed by the potential cost of not selecting the right design approach or team from the outset. Indeed, many clients comment on how their project understanding and strategic thinking significantly improved as a result of holding a design competition, in which multiple teams interrogated their brief, requirements and aspirations to generate potential design solutions.

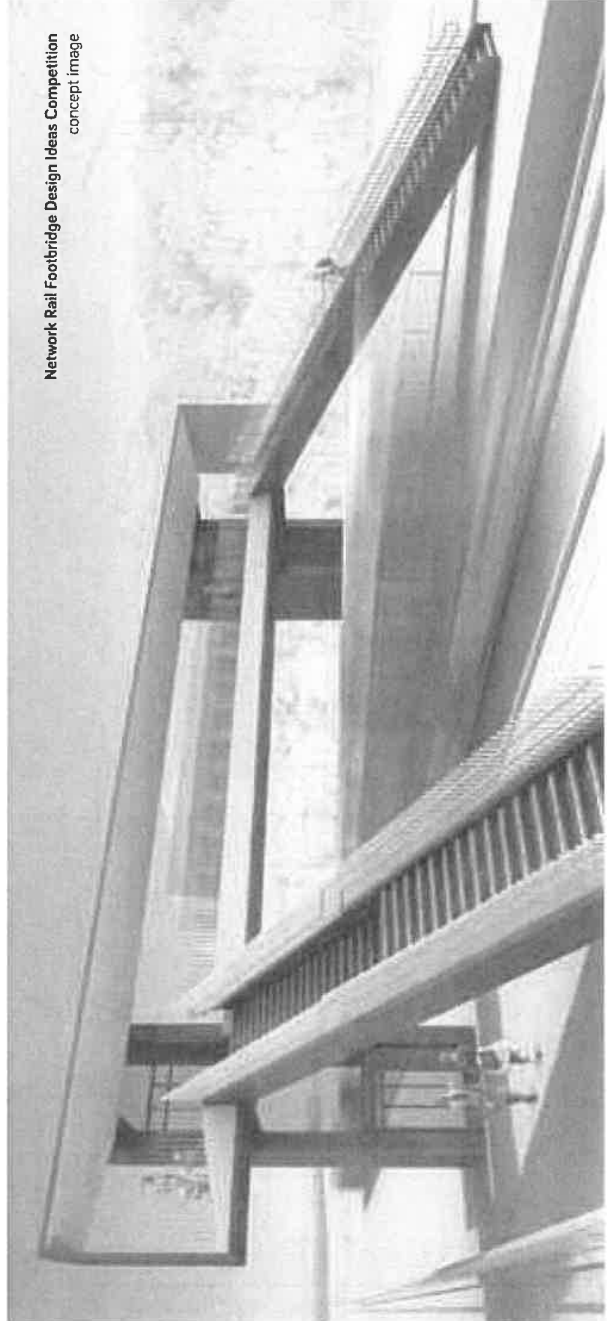
The fundamentals of a good competition are a brief with a clear vision, an evaluation panel comprising relevant expert design professionals, and a strong client commitment. This should be planned carefully, and consideration given to appointing specialist competition managers such as the RIBA.

Well-run competitions can provide better choices for clients and more opportunities to architects and designers producing an outcome that is often better than anticipated. On the other hand, poorly conceived or badly managed competitions may result in wasted effort for a client and competing teams, and an undeliverable project.

Re-imagining Railway Stations
concept image



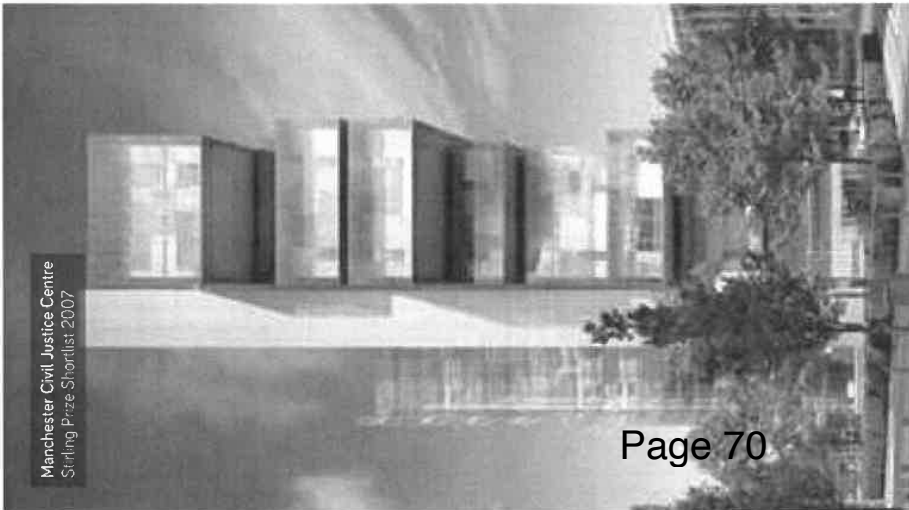
Network Rail Footbridge Design Ideas Competition
concept image



“Our experience as an infrastructure Client with the RIBA competitions we’ve held has been extremely positive. We’ve seen innovative, creative and sustainable solutions to the design problems we’ve set and from each of the competitions we have discovered new design talent from the supply chain that we would have struggled to engage with via our normal procurement routes.”

Anthony Dewar
Network Technical Head Buildings & Architecture
Network Rail

Manchester Civil Justice Centre
Stirling Prize Shortlist, 2007



Bishop Edward King Chapel
RIBA Stirling Prize Shortlist, 2013

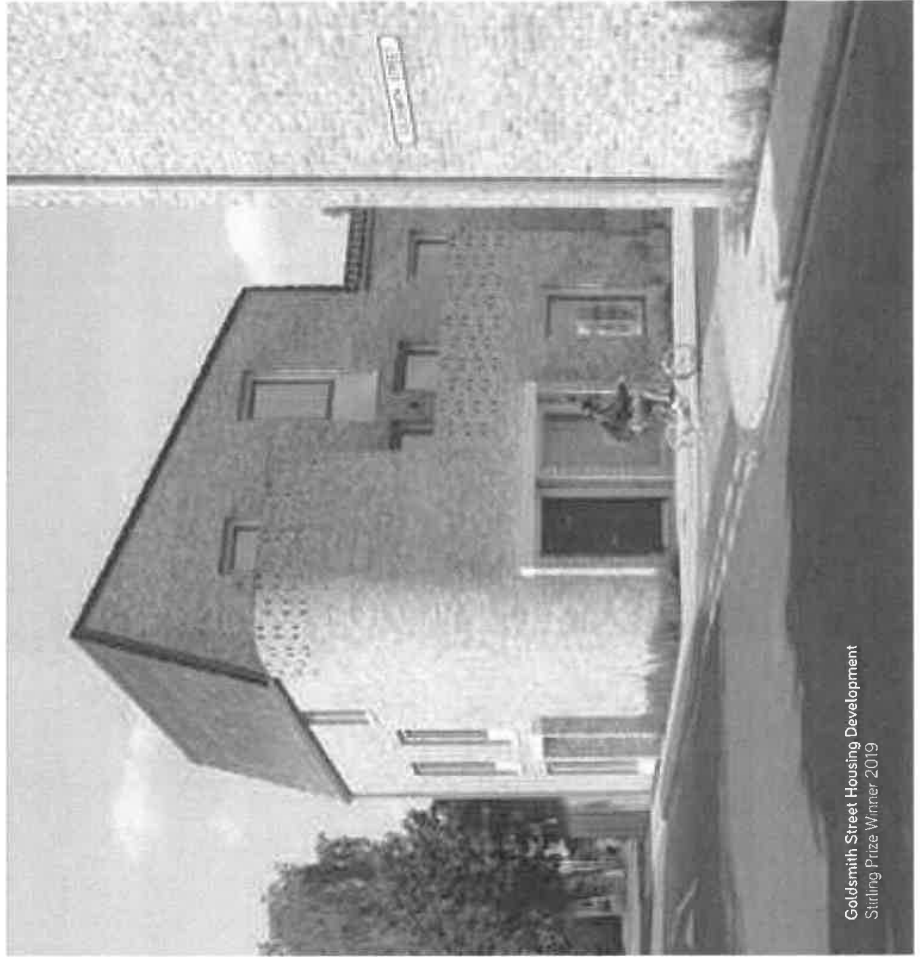
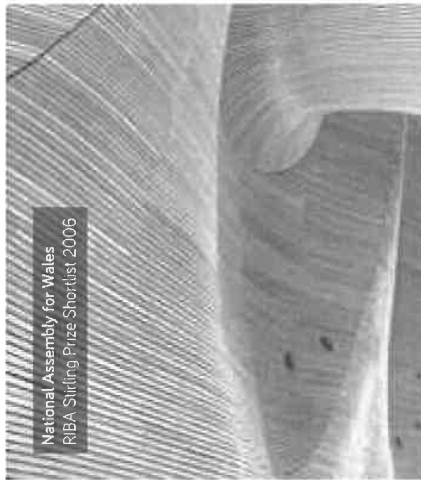


Stirling Prize

The RIBA Stirling Prize is presented to RIBA Chartered Architects and International Fellows for buildings in the UK which have made the greatest contribution to the evolution of architecture over the previous year.

A number of RIBA Competition projects have gone on to receive regional and national RIBA awards and to be shortlisted for the Stirling Prize, with three of them becoming overall winners.

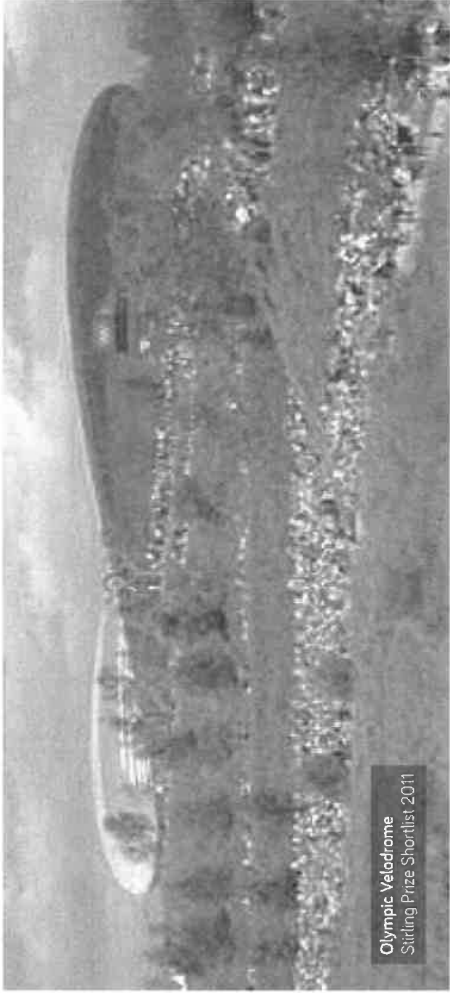
National Assembly for Wales
RIBA Stirling Prize Shortlist, 2006



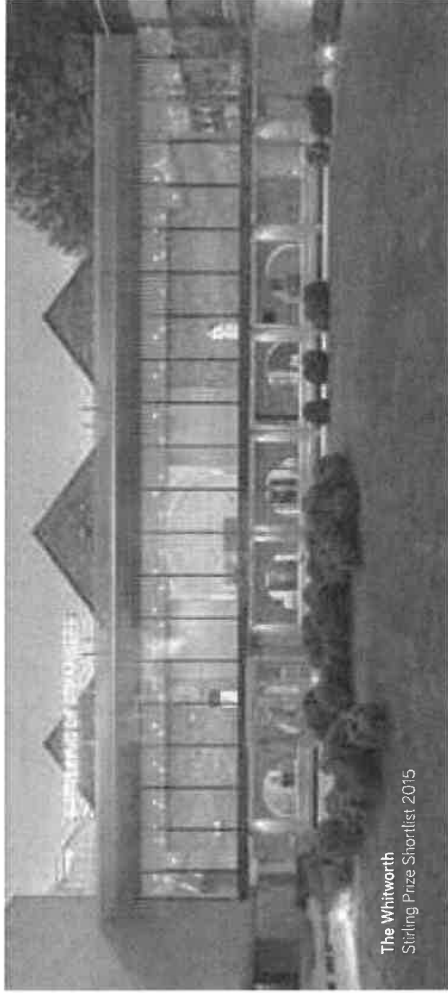
Goldsmith Street Housing Development
Stirling Prize Winner, 2019

Kentish Town Health Centre
Stirling Prize Shortlist, 2009

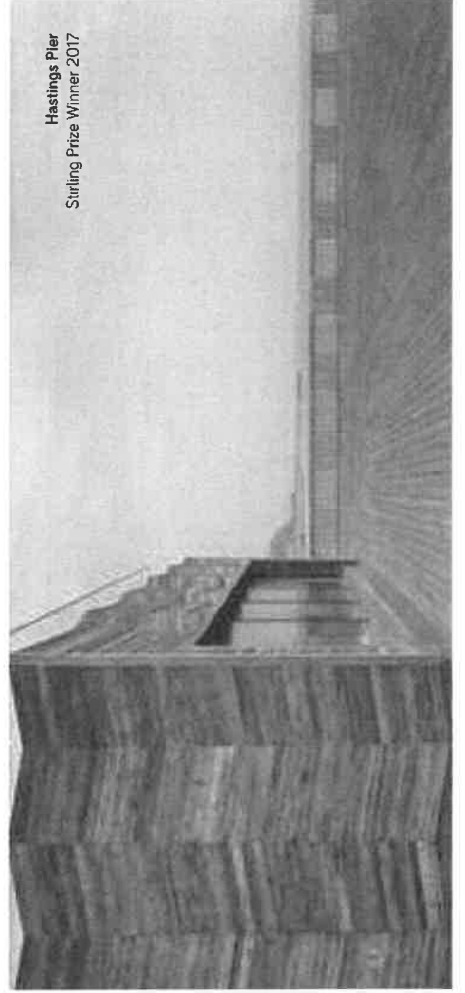




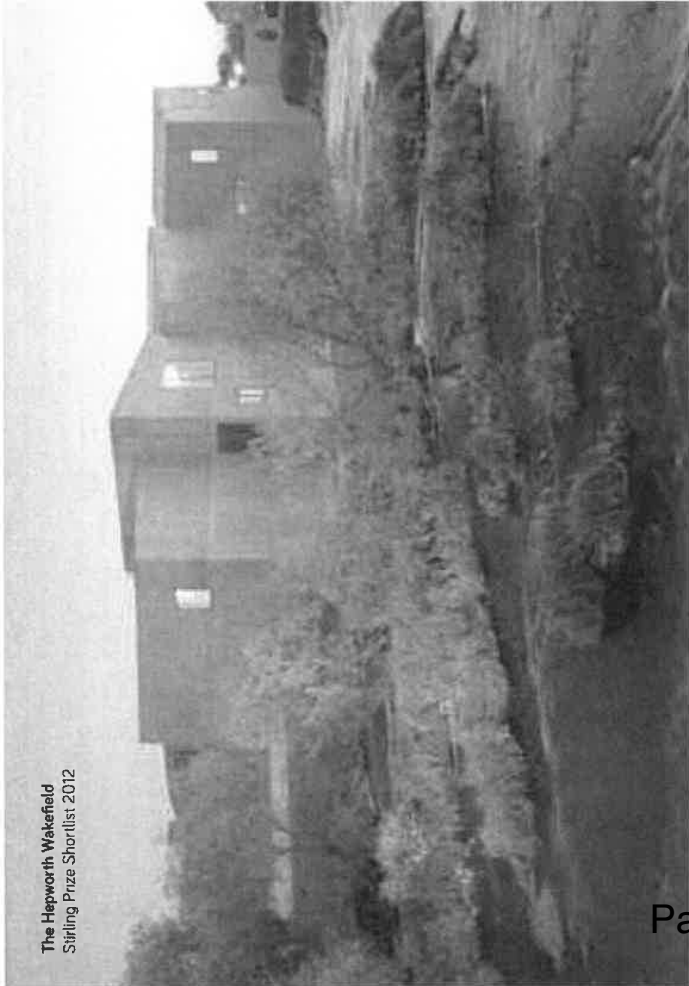
Olympic Velodrome
Stirling Prize Shortlist 2011



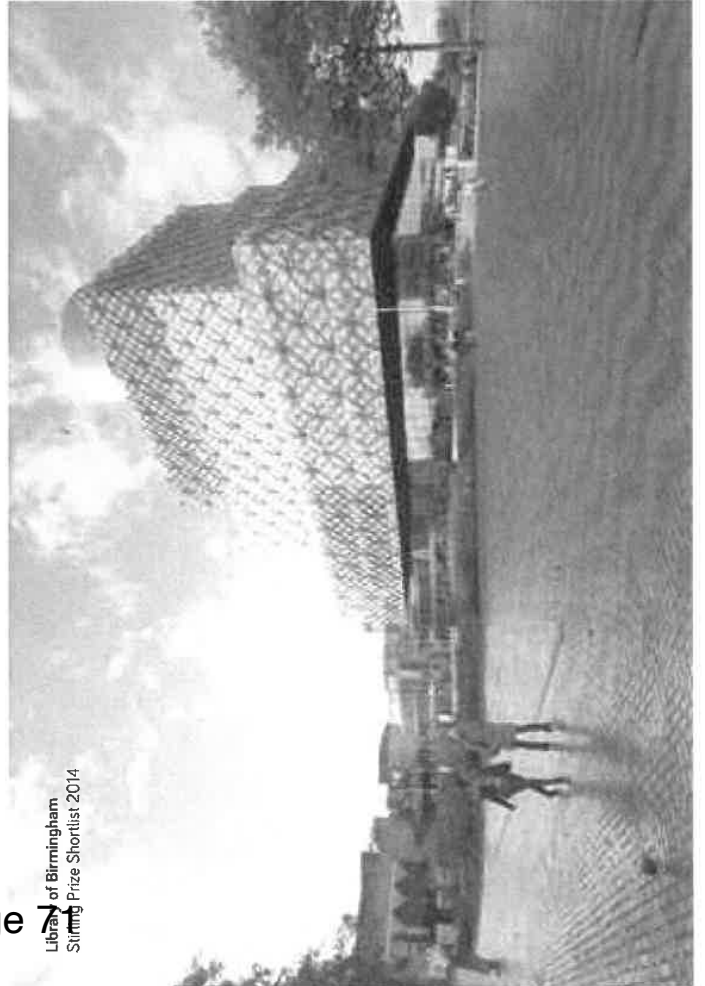
The Whitworth
Stirling Prize Shortlist 2015



Hastings Pier
Stirling Prize Winner 2017



The Hepworth Wakefield
Stirling Prize Shortlist 2012



Library of Birmingham
Stirling Prize Shortlist 2014

RIBA Competitions Management Service

RIBA Competitions has extensive experience of delivering high profile competitions and offers a comprehensive management service to clients. The RIBA Competitions brand is recognised as an indication of fairness and an assurance of best practice procedures.

The team runs competitions to the very highest standards of governance, meeting UK Procurement Regulations, and following best practice guidelines.

Each project managed through the RIBA Competitions service is assigned an experienced Competitions Manager who acts as the key Client contact point, together with support from the wider competition delivery team.

The experienced team can provide advice on the most appropriate type of competition, help develop the brief and provide support throughout the process. They can help you consider carefully what is needed to enable you to choose the right team and/or design.

After reading this guide if a competition is of interest to you, the next step would be to speak with the team about your project and to find out more about the service provided by RIBA Competitions in the management of a competition. A tailored proposal can be produced which will provide further detail including a breakdown of the associated costs involved.

Best Practice Principles

The RIBA's dedicated competitions team has a combined experience of over 80 years and within that time has developed best practice principles for an RIBA Competition which are:

- **The appointment of an RIBA Competition Architect Adviser**
- **Development of a good brief**
- **Appropriate timeframe for the competition**
- **A rigorous, fair and transparent process**
- **Payment of honoraria to shortlisted teams to acknowledge work undertaken**
- **Copyright protection for the architect**
- **Feedback to entrants**

Develop a good brief

The success of a competition is largely influenced by the quality of the brief as it will have a critical bearing on the entrants' response. The brief should be well presented, unambiguous and as informative as possible, clearly setting out the requirements but enabling the entrant freedom of design interpretation.

RIBA Competitions team can guide the Client as to the key elements to include to Develop a good brief.

RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge Targets

The RIBA strongly recommends that its architectural competitions should incorporate the RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge targets. The RIBA has developed targets for operational energy use, embodied carbon and water use reductions. These take into account the latest recommendations from the Green Construction Board and have been validated through consultation with UK professional bodies and with the Committee on Climate Change. The targets are progressive yet realistic, and a vital first step to ensure the construction industry has delivered the significant reductions necessary by 2030 in order to have a realistic prospect of achieving net zero carbon for the whole UK building stock by 2050.

www.architecture.com/about/policy/climate-action/2030-climate-challenge

RIBA Competition Architect Adviser

An integral part of an RIBA managed competition is the involvement of an independent and impartial RIBA Competition Architect Adviser who is a senior chartered member of the RIBA and highly regarded.

The Adviser role is of key importance as they help prepare tailored briefing material and provide an independent opinion when evaluating submitted material.

The Adviser is typically an experienced architect and former competition winner or judge who has an appreciation of the time and effort invested by entrants and who will help to achieve the best possible outcome for the competition. They will also be experienced in critiquing design work and have an extensive knowledge and appreciation of different architectural styles.

Communication Channels and Reach

The RIBA benefits from having a range of exclusive communication channels that can be utilised to maximise exposure, reach and raise the profile of the competition project.

- **Social Media** - The RIBA together with RIBA Competitions have an active and wide-reaching social media following across Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn with over half a million followers, enabling us to target different audiences on behalf of our clients.
- **RIBA Membership** - An entrant does not have to be an RIBA Member to enter an RIBA Competition. However, the RIBA has 48,000 members with 8,000 based overseas who can be directly informed about the Competition through the weekly RIBA Member e-bulletin.
- **Architecture.com** - The RIBA's dedicated website www.architecture.com is recognised internationally for being a focal point for architecture and receives over a million hits a month.

Graphic and Web Design Services

The competitions team benefits from having an inhouse Graphic & Web designer who can create a dedicated website if desired. A website helps create an identity for the project and is an excellent way to promote the competition to an international audience in addition to providing a central place for entrants to view the documentation. It can also raise the profile of the client and the project in general and create a specific visual identity that can be tailored to compliment your existing branding or to create a new brand if preferred.

Alternatively, a fully designed PDF brief can be created again utilising a tailored or unique visual identity.

Honoraria or Prize Money

In RIBA competitions it is accepted best practice that clients should make a contribution towards the costs incurred by the shortlisted teams in preparing their design work and commissioning other consultants. The amount of honoraria or prize money should reflect the work required and the costs incurred and should be stated at the launch of the competition. Further guidance on how to set appropriate honoraria levels can be provided by the RIBA.

Set aside a budget for the competition

A competition requires a significant commitment from the client of both time and money. Initially there will be a budget required for the competition itself, to cover any competition management, specialist/technical input and honoraria or prize money.

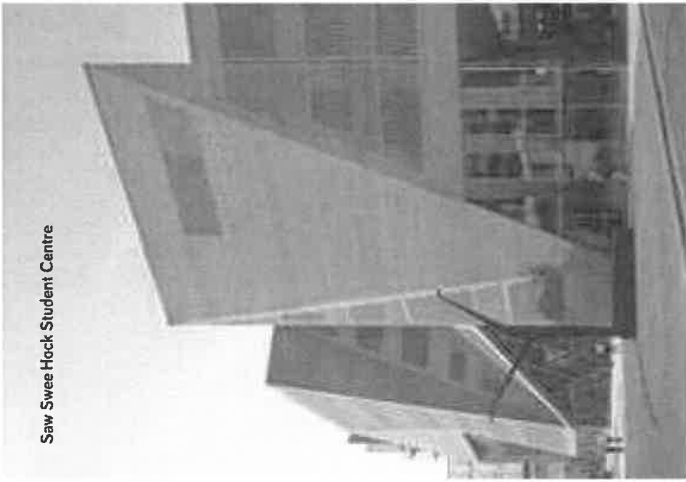
The competition budget required will vary depending on the scope such as the type of competition process, timeframe, publicity, design requirements and the appropriate level of honoraria. A cost estimate will be included in the tailored proposal provided on request.

Copyright

In all RIBA competitions there should be a commitment to protect copyright, which should be in accordance with the UK's Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. Presentation material may however be used for promotional purposes associated with the competition.



Taylor Wimpey Project 2020



Saw Swee Hock Student Centre



Great Place: Lakes and Dales, Horton in Ribblesdale
concept image



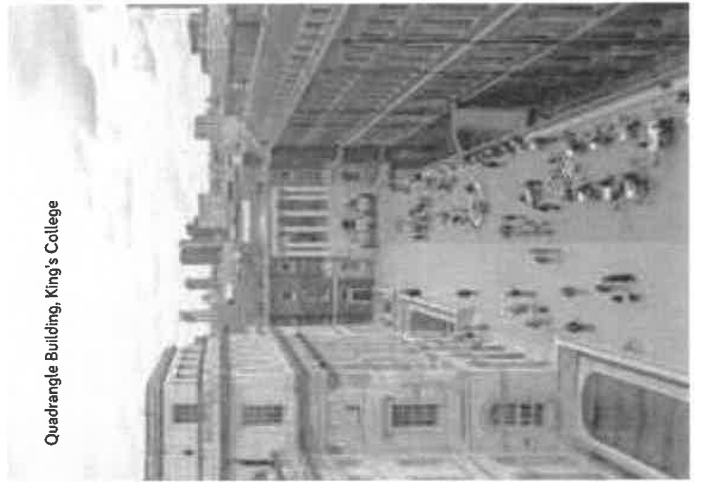
Clare Studio



Prescot Market Place



BBC The Listening Project



Quadrangle Building, King's College



Student Centre and New Square, UCLAN



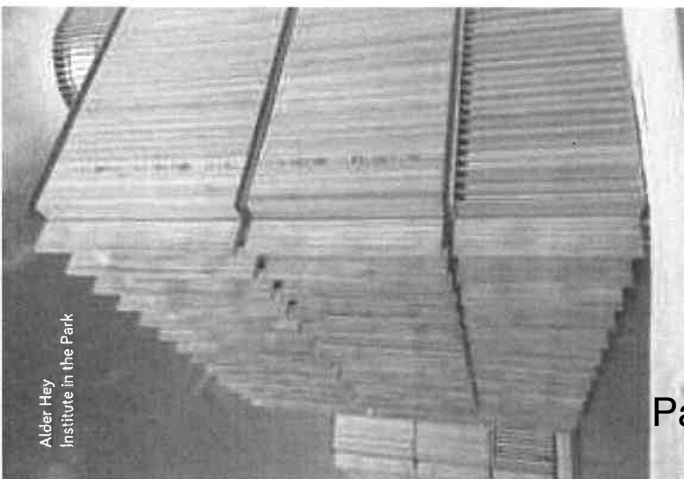
Halley VI Research Station, Antarctica



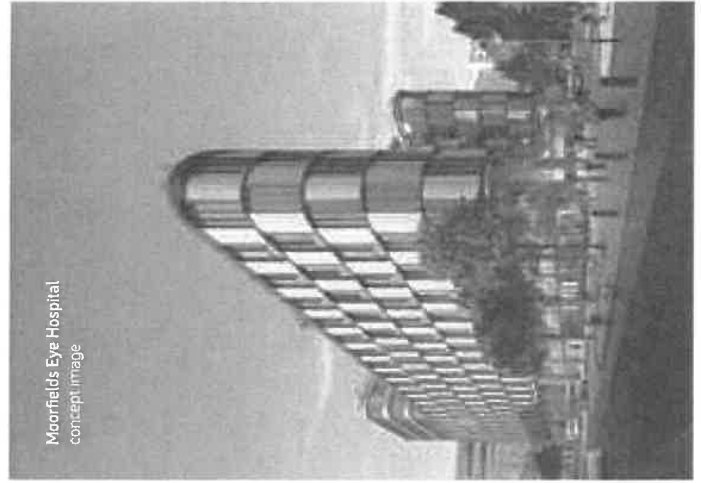
Eternal Wall of Answered Prayer
concept image



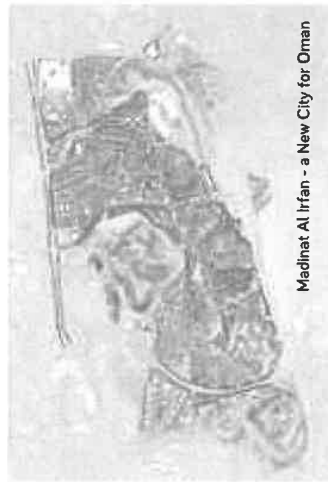
Leeds University Student Centre
concept image



Alder Hey
Institute in the Park



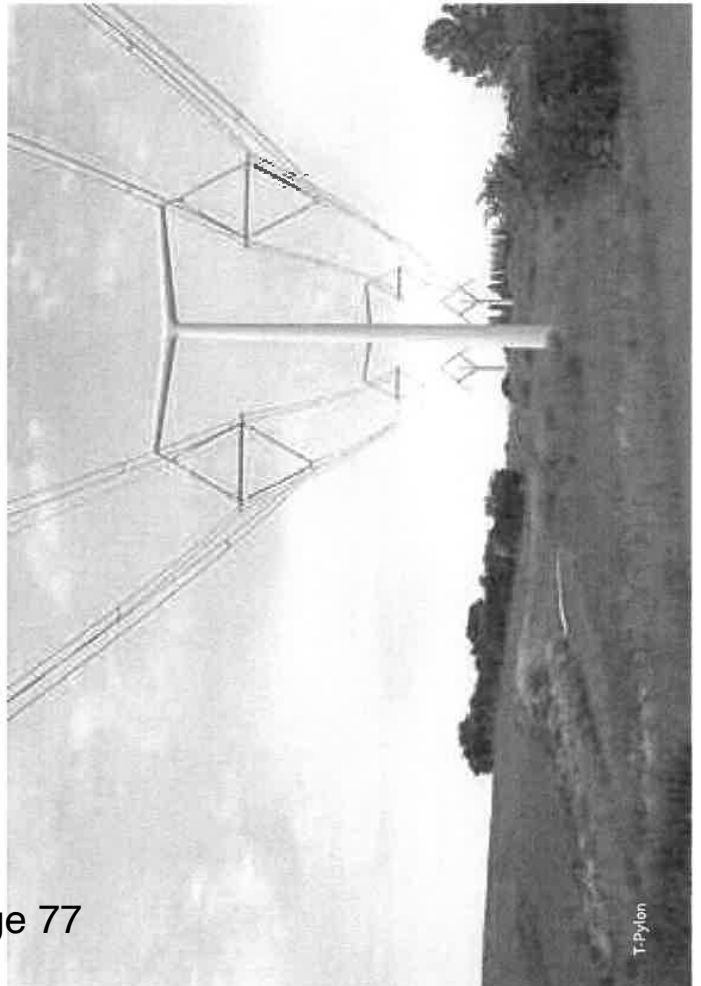
Moorfields Eye Hospital
concept image



Madinat Al Irfan - a New City for Oman

"RIBA supply an excellent platform to access a global pool of talented architects and designers. The competition process was well executed, with RIBA representatives providing knowledgeable advice and guidance when called upon."

Private Client



T-Pylon

How to find out more and Contact Us

RIBA Competitions has delivered some of the highest profile, most dynamic building projects in the UK through competition and has extensive experience of working with a wide variety of clients.

It is worthwhile considering a design competition for your next new building, refurbishment project or structure to help you achieve the highest quality of design from the outset.

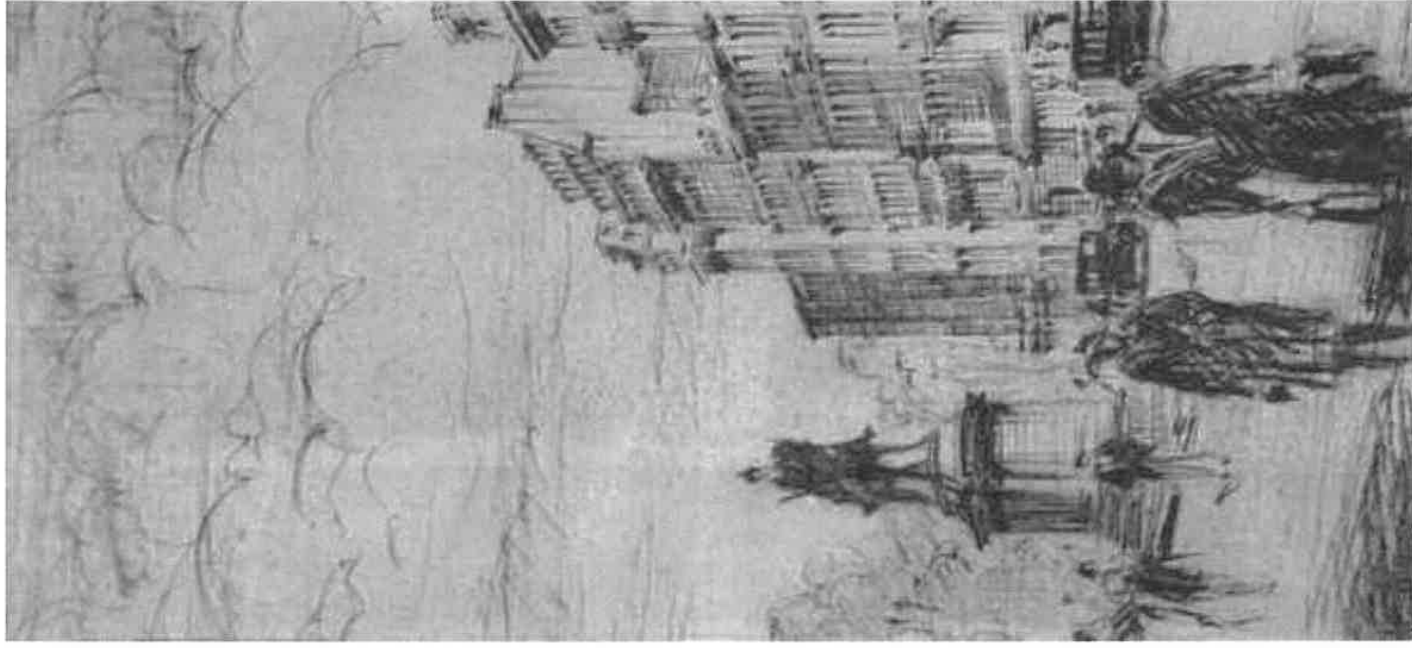
We are here to help you on this journey, please contact us to confidentially discuss your potential competition project with the team on:

+44 (0)207 307 5355
riba.competitions@riba.org
www.architecture.com/competitions

This guide provides general information only and is not intended to be an exhaustive statement of the law. Although we have taken care over the information, you should not rely on it as legal advice. We do not accept any liability to anyone who does rely on its content.

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RIBA 66 Portland Place

The Portland Place site was acquired in 1931 and a recommendation was made that an open competition should be held for the design of the new building. The competition was launched soon after and coincided with other public architectural competitions for landmark buildings such as Guildford Cathedral, Norwich Town Hall and the Stratford Memorial Theatre.

The original competition brief placed no restrictions on entrants with regards to style and quickly ignited debate in the architectural profession. The brief said 'it should be borne in mind that the new RIBA building, by reason of its representative character is likely to be held by the present and by future generations of architects and the general public to be an example of the best work of our time.' In a statement the RIBA said 'The professional critics will have the chance of their lives and the war between modernist and traditionalist may be expected to burst into unequalled fury whatever the result may be.'

There was considerable interest with 284 entries – 66 of which came from overseas. The entries were judged on the intelligibility of their plans and sections, and on the all-important facade designs to Portland Place and Weymouth Street.

In 1932 Grey Wormum's design was selected as the winner; it was generally commended for its clever use of plan and section and subtle balance of modernity and classicism. The building was carefully designed to meet the needs of the professional institute in the 1930s. As a piece of architecture, it was a clear statement of its time, but clearly has relevance to architecture today.

The RIBA headquarters building is an exemplar of high quality 1930s craftsmanship that straddles both traditional and classicist tastes and modernist aspirations. Moreover, the fact that the building was designed by, selected by, and built for architects in open competition makes it highly significant as a physical realisation of the aspirations of the profession in the early twentieth century.

Today, the building is still recognised as an iconic piece of British Architecture and remains central to RIBA activities.

Source: RIBA Conservation Management Plan by Julian Harrap Architects April 2009
Image: © RIBA Collections

With thanks to the following architectural practices and projects that originated through the RIBA Competitions process

- front cover, 2
 4 **New Town House Building, Kingston University** by Grafton Architects @ Terence Reoiv
 6 **Hallé St Peter's** by Stephenson Studio @ Daniel Hopkinson
 8 **Birmingham Centenary Square** by Graeme Massie Architects @ Fitzroyald Contractors Ltd
 13 **New Scotland Yard by Allford Hall Monaghan Morris Architects** @ Timothy Spoor
 16 **The Marshall Building, LSE** by Grafton Architects @ Nick Kozar
Manchester Civil Justice Centre by Denton Corker Marshall @ Tim Griffin
Bishop Edward King Chapel by Niall McLaughlin Architects @ Niall McLaughlin
National Assembly for Wales by Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners @ DerPhon
Kentish Town Health Centre by Allford Hall Monaghan Morris @ Rob Parrish
Goldsmith Street by Mikhail Riches @ Tim Crocker
 17 **The Hepworth Wakefield** by David Chipperfield Architects @ Iwan Baan
Library of Birmingham by Mecanoo @ Corporate Communications
Olympic Velodrome by Hopkins Architects @ National Media
The Whitworth by NUMA @ Alan Williams
 19 **Hastings Pier** by dRMM Architects @ Alex de Rijck
Re-imagining Railway Stations by 7N Architects
Network Rail Footbridge by Gottlieb Paludan Architects
- 24
Great Place: Lakes and Dales by McMullen Studio
Clare Studio by Hayhurst & Co @ Andrew Henry
Saw Swee Hock Student Centre by O'Donnell & Tuomey @ Dennis Gilbert/MFW
Taylor Wimpey Project 2020 by OpenStudio @ Taylor Wimpey
Student Centre and New Square, UCLAN by Hawkins Brown @ Jack Habbalane
Quadrangle Building, King's College by Hall McKnight @ Johan Dehlin
Prescot Market Place by Mark Wrey Architects @ Knowsley Council
BBC The Listening Project by JaK Studio @ Nick Konev/Ian Woodcock
Alder Hey Institute in the Park by Hopkins Architects @ RIBA Competitions
Eternal Wall of Answered Prayer by Snug Architects @ Rendaft
Halley VI British Antarctic Research Station by Hugh Broughton Architects @ British Antarctic Survey
Leeds University Student Centre by O'Donnell & Tuomey
T-Pylon by Bystrup @ Bystro
Madinat Al Irfan - a New City for Oman by Allies and Morrison
Moorfields Eye Hospital by AECOM Ltd with White Arkitekter AB + Penoyre and Prasad
Windermere Jetty Museum by Carmody Groarke @ Christian Riches
- 25
 back cover
 More projects can be viewed at:
www.architecture.com/competitions

APPENDIX F

24th October 2023
Job No. 10223MTC

Structural Report on 'The Blue Pool',
Melksham
and
Comments on Feasibility of Proposed Changes

Author: M.W.Mitchell
Director BSc CEng MICE

Structural Solutions Management Ltd

Registered in England and Wales 04341993

Registered Office: Dairy Studios | 102 Lincoln Street | Bristol | BS5 0BJ

Directors: Peter Beresford BSc C.Eng MStructE and Mark Mitchell BSc C.Eng MICE

T. 0117 9245014 E. admin@structuralsolutions.co.uk W. structuralsolutions.co.uk

Structural Report on 'The Blue Pool', Melksham and Comments on Feasibility of Proposed Changes

Purpose of the Report

Structural Solutions was commissioned to carry out an inspection of 'The Blue Pool' in Melksham to determine whether there are any structural 'issues' with the building. Also, consider the proposed development changes to amalgamate this with the Assembly Hall from a structural aspect.

Introduction

The building is single storey with a flat roof constructed with masonry external walls supporting steel lattice roof trusses with profile metal roof above. We could not determine the build-up of the roof above the profile metal roof but believe that the roof finish is a waterproof membrane over insulation. Internally, walls of the administrative areas, foyer and the changing rooms are divided by concrete blockwork walls with a suspended ceiling below the roof. The roof above the swimming pool itself and adjacent fitness suite are of similar steel lattice trusses supporting a profile metal deck roof although there is no suspended ceiling in either area. The trusses over the swimming pool are supported each end by a structural steel eaves beam spanning between steel posts. The external south facing elevation is glazed and the north and west external elevations are concrete blockwork masonry with no windows except for a double door to the north west corner presumably used as a fire exit. The divide between the swimming pool and fitness suite is also glazed. The internal wall between the swimming pool and changing rooms is of concrete blockwork masonry and we believe is load bearing supporting the roof trusses over the Foyer. Finally, the Plant Room has a similar profile metal deck but is supported by structural steel beams rather than trusses.

The connection to the Assembly Hall to the east of the 'Blue Pool' is via a two storey ashlar stone building which has a slate pitched roof believed to date from the mid-19th Century. This area houses a Kitchen that serves the Assembly Hall, a storage room and an 'old' plant room, much of the plant believed to be obsolete.

Generally, the existing structure of the 'Blue Pool' does not show any significant signs of degradation. There are no signs of foundation movement, masonry wall cracking or roof structure deterioration that would give cause for concern. The condition of the roof waterproofing would need to be assessed but this is outside the scope of this report.

Comments on Business Proposals to amalgamate the 'Blue Pool' with the Assembly Hall

- 1) Create Reception for the amalgamated building within the old 'Blue Pool'. The existing administration area would remain under the scheme but the changing rooms would be removed and new toilet facilities created. We believe that the existing changing rooms,

although constructed from concrete blockwork are non-loadbearing and thus could be removed without affecting the structure to create a larger Foyer with community area. Whether the changing room walls are non-loadingbearing would have to be confirmed by more intrusive investigation.

- 2) The existing plant room within the 'Blue Pool' could be stripped of existing plant and equipment and converted into Museum Storage without affecting the structure of the building.
- 3) The existing Fitness Suite could be changed into a Museum without affecting the structure of the building.
- 4) As the proposal to amalgamate the Assembly Hall with the 'Blue Pool' would require a link through the older two storey ashlar stone building between the two, new openings would be required through this structure. The plans that we have seen in a document produced by the 'Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall' indicate what is thought to be an existing passageway close to the existing 'Blue Pool' plant room. However, there is, we believe a wider infilled opening between the existing Foyer and link Kitchen that could be opened up without significant structural input. This would require re-location of the existing Kitchen so would need consideration.
- 5) Potential use of the existing swimming pool area has not been defined as part of the amalgamation but by infilling the pool itself with a suspended floor built off piers or 'sleeper' walls from the base of the pool would provide a significant area with minimal structural input.

Conclusion

Structurally, the old 'Blue Pool' shows no sign of significant deterioration and should be able to be amalgamated into the Assembly Hall without major structural repairs or alterations being necessary. Further assessment of the existing roof waterproofing would be required to determine current condition and likely timescale for repair or replacement. Modifications to the existing building are obviously required to achieve the proposals outlined in the document produced by the 'Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall' but none of these would have a detrimental effect on the structure of the building or require major structural changes.

References

- Regarding the Acquisition of the Blue Pool by Melksham Town Council – as presented by members of the Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall.
- Building Survey of Melksham Assembly Hall, Market Place, Melksham – Robson Building Surveying Ltd

APPENDIX A – Site Photos



Roof structure above suspended ceiling in Foyer



Roof structure above the Swimming Pool



Eaves beam on steel columns supporting Lattice Roof trusses above the Swimming Pool



Roof structure above the Fitness Suite



Location in existing Foyer of infilled opening to the Assembly Hall



Existing Foyer with suspended ceiling

APPENDIX G

MELKSHAM TOWN COUNCIL MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL

30 October 2023

Structural report on the Blue Pool building

Report of the Head of Operations

1. Purpose of the report

To evaluate the possibilities of amalgamating the vacant Blue Pool building into the Assembly Hall.

2. Current Situation

The Blue Pool was closed at the end of July 2022 and MTC have the possibility of acquiring it and realising an increased footprint of facility that could be developed for a number of uses some of which are documented in the following link [Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall \(fomah.org.uk\)](http://fomah.org.uk)

3. Background

The discussions around the future of the Assembly Hall are well documented and the inclusion of the Blue Pool could enhance the income generating capacity of the facility (and potentially reduce cost of provision) if developed appropriately .

4. Financial implications

This will largely be dictated by the aspirations of the Councillors, should they wish to go ahead and careful consideration needs to be given to the NNDR and development costs during a period of non-occupation.

5. Links to Town Council policies and core values

The development would bring a currently unused building back into valuable use for the community.

6. Risk assessment

There are risks associated with developing the building further down the line but for the purposes of this report, the structure is sound and the linking of the two buildings is possible.

7. Crime and disorder implications

N/A

8. Biodiversity considerations

N/A

9. Safeguarding

N/A

10. Recommendations

Now it is known that the linking of the buildings is structurally possible, the council need to decide what they would like to do with the buildings and the opportunities that exist.

APPENDIX H

Blue Pool – Assembly Hall – Options appraisal by Architects

1. Following the Council's decision to appoint an architect the Town Clerk immediately sought advice from the Town Council's Project Management team at MEA to ensure good practice and to adhere with the town council's procurement policy.
2. They have advised the following:
3. To include all of the town council's estate, town hall and 31 Market Place.
4. They will approach three architects to quote for carrying out an options appraisal based on an outline brief which MEA will prepare based on the information provided. They will invite three suitable architects (namely, Bolingbroke, NVB and Pritchard) to submit fee proposals. To be issued w/c 27 November, following the Council meeting. Fee proposals are then returned to allow selection before Christmas. The work will then be carried out in January/February.
5. They have requested title plans or site layouts that cover the four properties as these will need to be in the briefing papers. (provided)
6. MEA will carry out the PM part of this work for the council up to the selection of the architect, for a lump sum fee of £1,000 plus VAT. MEA are the professional experts and are highly experienced in this work with a proven track record of working with councils on similar projects so understand the legislation we must work to.
7. Once the architect is on board, we can provide PM leadership/support to the process and also provide some QS input to advise on the likely cost for each of the options. I suggest that we carry this out using hourly rates alert with a cap of £1,500 plus VAT.

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**MELKSHAM TOWN COUNCIL****MEETING OF THE *Full Council/Assembly Hall Working Group******Monday 22 January 2024******Approaches to Architects for Assembly Hall/ Blue Pool Project.*****Report of *The Committee Clerk*****1 Purpose of the report**

To update councillors on the Assembly Hall/ Blue Pool project

2 Background

On 27 November 2023 full council made the following resolution – ‘that Councillor Aves and the Committee Clerk draft a brief for architects, to then be circulated to members for comment. Any suggestions for architects to be forwarded to the Committee Clerk who is delegated to circulate the brief to architects.

Wording was supplied by Councillor Aves and circulated to all councillors. The wording was slightly amended by the Committee Clerk to remove, at the suggestion of the Locum Clerk, the word ‘tender’ and to make the wording flow.

The final wording, agreed with Councillor Aves was – ‘Melksham Town Council is about to embark on an exciting new project – the development of a new community facility in the centre of the town.

We have at our disposal two separate community facilities, the Assembly Hall and the Blue Pool, which are set back-to-back on a large space behind the Town Hall. We would like to develop one vibrant, versatile space that will serve the needs of a growing community for the foreseeable future. The resulting project must also reflect a commitment to environmentally conscious building practices and low, sustainable running costs.

Whilst we have our own list of needs and end uses, we are open to other suggestions that you might think sit with our vision of a modern entertainment facility that will stand out as a model for other towns to admire, as a standard for the 21st century.

We therefore invite plans from interested parties.

Attached are scale maps of the site showing present buildings, which you are at liberty to utilise, demolish or adapt, together with meeting minutes which show our wish list of facilities. For viewings of the properties and site please phone or email for an appointment with the Town Clerk or Town Council representative.

We look forward to hearing from you and discussing how your ideas fit in with our vision.’

This wording and supporting documents was forwarded to the following firms, as supplied by councillors:-

- Roberts Slimbrick
- DB3 Group
- SR

- DKA
- SRA
- NVB

It was also forwarded as a courtesy to Mark Saint of MEA.

Details were also posted to Melksham Town Council website and social media.

3 Current Situation

The following responses have been received.

DB3 Group

Thanks for your email introducing what sounds like an exciting opportunity for Melksham. We had some early involvement via Wiltshire Council with the Melksham Campus project and delivered the relocation of Melksham football and rugby clubs to their new sites, so would be interested in principle.

However I have a few queries at this stage –

- Are you seeking proposals from a limited number of architects at the moment, or has this email been circulated to a large number of parties?
- Your email mentions that you are seeking plans – do you mean just initial thoughts about uses or drawn design proposals?
- If the latter, is this a design competition? If so, I think we would need to see a more detailed brief, scoring criteria and the reward for the successful company.
- Is funding in place for the project?
- You don't mention a fee so should we assume work carried out at this stage would be speculative?

I would be happy to discuss further on the phone if this would be easier.

DKA

Thank you for thinking of DKA. Exciting news!

You may / may not be aware that DKA has an intimate knowledge of the Melksham House / Melksham Assembly Hall / Blue Pool sites. We have been involved with the Melksham House site since 2011 when Wiltshire Council decided to purchase the site from Cooper Tyres.

In addition to our work related to the design of the Melksham Campus (DKA did the concept design through to planning / tender), we have over the years also looked at various options for the possible use of the Blue Pool site with Wiltshire Council.

In 2017 we were approached by Melksham Town Council for undertaking a feasibility for the Assembly Hall and Blue pool, but this wasn't pursued.

You mention that you are inviting plans 'from interested parties'. Do you see this as a competition with some initial concept ideas, rather than a fee proposal for an initial feasibility study? If so, do you have a timeframe for responses?

If possible, we would like to arrange a site visit - can you let us know the best time that suits you?

NVB

Many thanks for the message and taking my call earlier.

As I mentioned, we would be delighted to be involved in this exciting opportunity, but I am a little unclear on what the Council are expecting in response to the message? The implication appears to be that the Council are expecting work to be undertaken for no charge. I'm afraid this is not possible.

If the Council wish us to provide a fee proposal for a feasibility / option study, we would be delighted to provide this.

A little more information would be helpful ...

1. What is the Council's timescale to undertake such a study?
2. How much engagement would the Council wish to undertake with the wider community?
3. What is the approximate project budget that the Council has in mind?
4. Will the completion of the study lead to an appointment (Architectural) to deliver the project?
5. What is the Council's preferred procurement route?
6. Is a suitable cost consultant already appointed?

In the meantime I would be delighted to meet with the Council to explain how we could assist, if that would be of interest.

Mark Saint

I understand where the members are coming from and the approach may achieve a similar output to the RIBA competition option I suggested a few months ago.

However, the briefing below needs, in my view, to also consider commercial and associated matters too. Without doing so, the Council may get into a bit of a pickle with next steps post submissions.

Just my thoughts and I wish you luck with the process.

No reply was received from SR or SRA. The named person at Roberts Slimbrick had retired and suggested an alternative contact. No reply was received from that alternative.

4 Recommendations

It is clear that all three firms who replied are interested but seek clarification on fees/funding and what the council expects at this stage. These would seem to be the kinds of issues Mark Saint foresaw. Councillors need to decide on how they wish to take the matter forward.



Borrowing Approval Application – County Association Checklist

To be completed by County Officers before the Borrowing Approval Application form, accompanying documents, endorsement and explanatory letter from applicant's council (if necessary) and this form, with covering email/letter from CALC are sent to the Parish Borrowing team at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) via: Parish.Borrowing@levellingup.gov.uk

When County Officers are first approached by Parish and Town Councils for information on submitting a borrowing application the Councils should be referred to the following documents available on the NALC website:

- Parish and Town Borrowing Application Form 2022-23
- Parish and Town Borrowing – Hints & Tips Guidance
- DLUHC – Parish Borrowing Process Presentation
- Supporting example templates – budget and survey questionnaire

The documents above will provide borrowing applicants with an understanding of the process, an overview of DLUHC's assessment criteria and expectations, and a list of supporting documentation to be provided with the borrowing application form.

The checklist below outlines the high-level checks and actions County Officers should make prior to submission, bearing in mind it is not the role of the CALC to "approve" the submission, but check for completeness. Further information on DLUHC's borrowing assessment criteria is provided in the Hints and Tips Guidance.

1	Council exists and narrative appears correct (Box 1-5)	Yes / No
2	Purpose of borrowing is clear (Box 6) (This is used in the formal Approval Letter)	Yes / No
3	Funding schedule and amount to be borrowed is complete and clear (Box 7)	Yes / No
6	Proposals to increase the precept for the purpose of borrowing repayments are complete and clear (Box 14)	Yes / No
7	Is project required more than the result of £5 per elector calculation (Box 16)	Yes / No
8	Supporting documentation enclosed or full explanation provided in cover letter (Box 19)	Yes / No
9	Check completion (Box 20 - must be signed manually): Date of Full Council Resolution Name and signed by the Chair of Council Name and signed by the RFO	Yes / No

CALC Actions required:

		Done Initials/Date
A.	Take and retain copy of all documents to be sent to DLUHC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application form & this checklist • Covering letter from Parish/ Town Council • Minutes detailing resolution to borrow • Financial documents i.e. budget, cash flow statement, AGAR, reserves overview • Report to Council/ Business case • Resident consultation on the purpose of borrowing, borrowing amount and precept increase (if applicable) 	



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

B.	Email/ letter to DLUHC including "I have completed and enclosed the standard NALC checklist and have no further comments to make".	
C.	Acknowledgement of Application Form/documents and advise council of CALC action taken.	

Reviewed and complete: Date:
CALC Checklist / 2022-23

A checklist of key information to be provided with any Parish and Town Councils borrowing application

Councils wishing to borrow will have to get in touch with the County Association, whether a member or not, to submit the Application Form. Where a borrowing approval is required the purpose must be detailed on the application and in a report to Council. Approvals should only be sought for capital expenditure. Please complete the borrowing application form and provide the following supporting information;

1. Copy of full minute of the Full Council Meeting with the resolution to seek the Secretary of State's approval for the proposed borrowing drafted in accordance with the example criteria;
2. Copy of the Council's budget or cash flow forecast for the current year, and next year (if available), showing the provision made to meet the loan costs, as well as a copy of the latest Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR);
3. Full report to the Council or business case. This should include a breakdown of the proposed works, estimated costs, financial planning to fund the loan repayments and the steps/options the Council/has in place to mitigate the risk for not being able to afford the loan repayments;
4. Please provide information on how the Council will afford the loan repayments, breakdown of funding resources, amounts to be used from reserves, and any increase of precept to fund the borrowing;
5. If the Council precept is to be increased to cover the loan repayment, please confirm the amount and percentage of the planned increase related to the loan only (if possible how much increase for house holders at Band D);
6. If applicable, please provide evidence of public support to increase the precept to cover the loan repayment (e.g. the result of any consultation).
7. You still need to provide details how local residents were consulted on the project and associated borrowing even if you are not increasing precept to fund the loan (e.g. newsletter/website/in the agenda of public meeting).

Full provision of this information with the application demonstrating that it meets the guidance criteria will expedite the approval process. For further information,

- Please read full guide to parish borrowing in Page 5 and the supporting documents;
- For any queries, please contact your local association at first instance or;
- For clarification on any aspect of this guidance, please contact DLUHC by email: parish.borrowing@levellingup.gov.uk

APPLICATION FOR BORROWING APPROVAL FOR TOWN/PARISH COUNCILS

- If you have any queries about completing this form please contact your local county association.
- When completing this form please use CAPITALS.
- Once completed and signed please send this form to your local county association.

1. Name of Council	
2. Name of Clerk	
Working Address (inc. Postcode)	
Email address	
Telephone	
3. Name of Chair	
4. Home Address (inc. Postcode)	
Telephone	
Email address	
5. District/Unitary Council area	
6. Purpose of Borrowing Please give a brief description of the purpose for which funds are required. Example of Capital projects : Purchase of land/building or, construction/building works or, provision of other assets or; provision of grants to another body for a Capital expenditure	
7. Total Contract/Project Value	£
Funding from Council's own resources	£
Funding from other sources	£
Amount to be borrowed	£
8. Deadline for approval (if applicable) If borrowing is required by a specific date – eg an auction date, or to meet match-funding requirements - give details here.	

9. Is funding from other sources confirmed?	Yes	No	N/A	
10. Proposed Borrowing Source				
11. Repayment option (if borrowing from PWLB)	Annuity	EIP	N/A https://www.dmo.gov.uk/data/pdfdatareport?reportCode=D9A.1	
12. Intended Borrowing Term (please specify the number of years)				
13. Details of Existing Loans	1 st loan	2 nd loan	3 rd loan	4 th loan
	£	£	£	£
Date Taken Out				
Amount Outstanding	£	£	£	£
Unexpired Term				
14. Are you increasing Precept to fund this borrowing?	Yes	No		
What will be the amount and percentage of the planned increase per annum?	£	%		
What will cost band D per annum?	£			
15. If applicable, have you assessed the extent of public support to increase precept for this loan?	Yes	No		
If yes, what were the results of the assessment to increase precept for this loan?				
16. Precept for previous year:	£ for Band D:			
Precept for current year:	£ for Band D:			
Precept for next year:	£ for Band D:			
17. Number of Electorate				
18. Value and purpose of all funds, capital/revenue reserves and balances currently held.				

19. Have you provided the following supporting evidence?	Please tick the appropriate boxes below	
a) Full Council minutes with resolution to apply to DLUHC for borrowing	YES	NO
b) Report to the Council/ Business Case	YES	NO
c) Council Budget for current year and next year if available	YES	NO
d) Communications with local residents on the purpose of borrowing, borrowing amount and increase in precept (if applicable)	YES	NO

20.
Approval of Full Council

The above application was agreed by resolution of the full council on..... (date), the Report to Council and Budget attached have been taken to and approved by the full Council, and the draft Minutes attached have been seen and authorised for submission by the Chairman.

The Council undertakes to notify the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), as soon as reasonably practicable, in the event:-

- of not exercising the approval, or,
- it finds that the original amount requested is greater than the actual borrowing need.

SIGNED.....
(Chair of the Council)

DATE.....

NAME.....

SIGNED.....
(Responsible Financial Officer)

DATE.....

NAME.....

Please send signed, completed forms and all supporting information to your county association of local councils.

Failure to submit all required information will delay your borrowing approval.

A GUIDE TO PARISH AND TOWN COUNCIL BORROWING IN ENGLAND

Introduction

1. In this guide, all references to statutory provisions are to provisions in the Local Government Act 2003 ('the 2003 Act'). References to parish councils include those designated as town councils, village councils, community councils, neighbourhood councils and city councils in England.

2. This guide replaces all previous guidance on borrowing by parish councils in England and reflects the legal framework in force as at 1 April 2015. The law that allows a parish council to borrow money is contained in paragraph 2 of Schedule 1. Before such a council can borrow a sum of money, it must first receive an approval to borrow from the "appropriate person": in England the Secretary of State by way of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), and in Wales, the Welsh Ministers. Evidence of the borrowing approval may be required at audit.

3. This guide sets out the criteria that the Secretary of State generally applies in deciding whether to give borrowing approval, and how parish councils should go about applying for approval. It applies only to England. Community and town councils in Wales should contact the Local Government Finance Division of the Welsh Government (telephone: 029 20 823227 or 029 20 825223) for details of the approval system applicable to them.

4. There is no national limit on the total annual amount of borrowing approvals that will be granted. Councils should only apply for borrowing approval when they are fully ready to take up the borrowing, for example, when planning permission has been obtained. Applications by councils for borrowing approval should be sent to the local County Association affiliated to the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). This applies whether or not the council is a member of NALC.

5. If the Association considers that the application form is complete with no obvious omissions or errors, and that the application is made in good faith, the application will be forwarded to DLUHC. Where an Association has any concerns it will raise the matter with the council. The council may, if it wishes, take up any disputed issue with DLUHC. The review by the County Association is intended to assist councils in submitting well-founded applications to DLUHC. The County Association will provide a brief factual report to DLUHC with the application.

Local Accountability and Transparency

6. The Government's localism agenda aims to place more power into people's hands. For democratic accountability to increase, local people need to be able to hold local authorities to account over how they spend public funds and the decisions that are made on their behalf. This principle applies to decisions made by all levels of local government, including parish councils. Transparency is the foundation of this

accountability and, if people are to play a bigger role in society, they need to have the tools and information to enable them to do so.

7. When considering whether to apply for borrowing approval, parish councils should be fully open and transparent with their residents and taxpayers in all their dealings. Details of the project and plans for borrowing and loan repayment must be available to residents from an early stage. This could include discussion of proposals in open meetings, and ensuring that information is available for the public before and after a decision is taken, for example on the council website or published in local newsletters. Evidence of this will be taken into account in considering whether to give approval for borrowing. When increasing precept to fund borrowing, evidence of public support for increasing the associated precept will be required to support the loan application.

What is a Borrowing Approval?

8. It is a formal approval issued by the Secretary of State to borrow money.

9. The Secretary of State's decision on the borrowing application will be sent direct to the Clerk to the council. A copy of the decision letter will also be sent to the Chair of the council and the local County Association. Where approval to borrow is given, as well as containing the legal authority for the council to borrow money, the approval will state the maximum amount of money that can be borrowed, the purpose for which the money may be used, the period within which money must be borrowed, and the maximum period within which the borrowing must be repaid.

10. Where a council wishes to use borrowed money for a purpose other than that specified in the borrowing approval letter, written consent to the change of use must be obtained from DLUHC, prior to committing to the expenditure. This applies to unused funds.

Who can apply for Borrowing Approval?

11. Any parish council in England.

When is a Borrowing Approval not required?

12. Under paragraph 2(3)(a)(i) of Schedule 1, no approval is required for borrowing by temporary loan or overdraft from a bank or otherwise of sums which the council may temporarily require to meet expenses pending the receipt of revenues receivable by it in respect of the period of account in which the expenses are chargeable.

13. A council may also borrow by temporary loan or overdraft pending the raising of the loan permitted by a borrowing approval (paragraph 2(3)(a)(ii) of Schedule 1). A council must be in possession of the borrowing approval when the temporary loan is taken out, but no second approval is required. The temporary loan must be for the purpose of meeting expenses intended to be met by the approved borrowing. A council can also raise a further loan to repay the original loan without the need for another approval, so long as the new borrowing takes place within the fixed period

(paragraph 2(3)(b) of Schedule 1). For the meaning of "fixed period" see paragraph 33 of this guide.

14. In all other circumstances, borrowing approval is required.

How is an application for borrowing approval made?

15. In the first instance, councils should complete the application form included in this guidance. Contact should also be made with the local County Association who will process the application form once it is completed. All questions in the form need to be answered and all supporting information must be supplied (see paragraph 16 below). The making of the application requires approval by resolution of the full council (paragraph 4 of Schedule 1). The form must be signed by the Chair of the council and the responsible financial officer (in most councils the Clerk is also the responsible financial officer, but the post is sometimes a separate appointment). The completed form must be sent in hard copy to the County Association (see paragraph 4 above).

What information must be provided?

16. In addition the form must be accompanied by:-

- a copy of the council's budget for next year (or for the current year if next year's is not available) clearly illustrating the total income and expenditure and costs associated with the project in question,
- a copy of the written report or business case considered by the council in reaching its decision to apply for borrowing approval,
- the full minutes of the meeting at which the resolution to make the application was passed,
- evidence that residents have been consulted on the following:
 - i) the proposed project,
 - ii) the council's intention to borrow,
 - iii) proposals to increase the precept to meet borrowing costs, if applicable; and
 - iv) if applicable evidence of public support to increase precept because of the proposed borrowing.

17. Where the council intends to provide a grant to another body the references to "project" in this guide and in the application form apply to the assistance being provided by the council, not to the project towards which the assistance is given. For example, if a council wishes to borrow £50,000 to part finance a grant of £100,000 towards the construction by a local charity of a village hall costing £250,000, the application form should show £100,000 as the total cost of the project and £50,000 as the amount to be borrowed, and explain how the remaining £50,000 is to be financed by the council.

Parish council precepts and council tax referendum principles

18. When planning budgets and considering whether to apply for borrowing approval, parish councils should bear in mind the provisions of Chapter 4ZA of Part 1 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 relating to council tax referendums. Each

year, the Secretary of State will determine “excessiveness principles”. If an authority breaches those principles, it must arrange a referendum to seek the approval of its local electors to the excessive increase in council tax it has set. For 2022-23, no principles were set for parish councils: so the new referendum provisions did not apply to them for that year.

19. However, Ministers have made it clear that when setting principles in future years, the Secretary of State will consider whether this, in light of the extent to which restraint in relation to council tax in 2022-23 has been exercised in order to provide protection for local taxpayers and to extend the principle of direct democracy.

20. If the Secretary of State decides to determine council tax referendum principles in relation to parish councils for the financial year 2023-24, (and in subsequent financial years), a parish council would need to consider whether its relevant basic amount of council tax¹ was excessive by reference to those principles. Councils with precept increases resulting in a relevant basic amount of council tax which exceeded the principles would be required to hold a referendum to seek local electors’ approval to that increase. The result of the referendum would be binding and where an increase was not approved, the parish precept would be substituted with a precept that produced a relevant basic amount of council tax that was not excessive by reference to the principles. Parish councils would be responsible for meeting the costs of any referendum.

21. It should be noted that the Secretary of State will **not** exclude increases in parish council tax precepts attributable to a borrowing approval when considering whether to set council tax referendum principles for parish councils in 2023-24 and in future years.

22. The Secretary of State intends to determine excessiveness principles in parallel with the process for deciding the annual local government finance settlement for each year; so it is expected that principles will be proposed in November/December alongside the announcement of the provisional settlement.

What are the criteria for borrowing approval?

23. The Secretary of State will generally apply the following criteria in deciding whether to give borrowing approval:

- a) the borrowing should be for a purpose that would be capital expenditure as defined in section 16 of the 2003 Act. Appendix A to this guide explains what is covered by the section 16 definition;
- b) the amount to be borrowed should generally not be less than £5 multiplied by the number of local government electors for the area of the council as counted at the latest register for the electoral roll. However, the Department will consider

¹ For the meaning of “relevant basic amount of council tax” see section 52ZX(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

- applications for a lower borrowing amount where the total project cost is above the threshold and grants or other resources intended for the project expenditure will be refused or reduced if the borrowing does not go ahead;
- c) any unallocated balances (including, where appropriate, capital receipts), beyond those required for the prudent financial management of the council, should be used in the project for which borrowing is required;
- d) the council should have a realistic budget (this must be affordable, taking account of its effect on the council's precept) for the servicing and repayment of the debt. The Secretary of State will expect to see that the affordability of the loan charges and any other revenue costs arising from the project is demonstrated in the written report to the council recommending the borrowing application. A copy of the report should be submitted with the application form. The report should provide:
- an estimate of the annual costs, and an indication of whether they will be covered by reductions in other expenditure, or by additional income from the precept or other sources,
 - in cases where an increase in the precept is proposed, an estimate of the amount of the increase in both monetary and percentage terms, and recognition that any proposed increase in precept may be subject to council tax referendum principles in future years,
 - evidence that any risks and uncertainties affecting the financing of the project have been taken into account in assessing its affordability,
 - details of any significant financial developments that might affect the ability of the council to finance the costs in future years, so far as can reasonably be foreseen.
- e) The council should have consulted local residents on the project and associated borrowing. The format of consultation with residents is a matter for the council to decide, however councils should note the following:
- details of the project and plans for borrowing and loan repayment must be accessible to residents from an early stage,
 - decisions on borrowing must be taken in an open and transparent way, following discussion in open meetings,
 - inclusion of the matter on an agenda for a public meeting of the council will not, in itself, be considered sufficient evidence of consultation,
 - the council should ensure that information about the progress of the project continues to be available to residents following the approval to borrow,
 - in particular, any proposal to increase the precept to meet borrowing costs **must** be backed by evidence of public support.

When should a council apply?

24. All councils are encouraged to let their County Associations know of their borrowing requirements as soon as possible. However, councils should not apply for borrowing approval until all negotiations have been completed, all other sources of funding have been secured and all other consents (e.g. planning permission) have been obtained. If an applicant council is successful, processing of the borrowing approval should generally take between 3 – 4 weeks from the date of its receipt by DLUHC. The borrowing approval will authorise the council to take out a loan within a period of twelve months starting with the date of issue of the borrowing approval.

How much can a council borrow?

25. The amount that an individual council will be authorised to borrow will normally be limited to a maximum of £500,000 in any single financial year for any single purpose.

26. Where borrowing approval is sought for an amount higher than £500,000, DLUHC may issue the borrowing approval phased over the life of the project. An approval-in-principle for the full amount will normally be issued at the outset of the project, with formal approval letters issued at stages agreed with the council. DLUHC may request project progress reports at any time during the phased approvals process.

27. A council wishing to borrow more than £500,000 is encouraged to contact DLUHC as early as possible to discuss the approvals process and should acknowledge that the processing times will be longer due to additional stages of review.

Where can councils go for funds?

28. Councils may not, without the consent of HM Treasury, borrow otherwise than in sterling (section 2(3)). In practice, most councils are likely to obtain funds from the Public Works Loan Board or the clearing banks. When councils apply for funds, the Public Works Loan Board will insist that they have sight of the original borrowing approval. Loans may also be taken out from private or voluntary sector organisations, or from individuals. Irrespective of the proposed source of borrowing, councils must have borrowing approval in place before arranging a loan. Evidence of the borrowing approval may be required at audit. Councils are advised to seek appropriate advice.

29. Councils are reminded that the decision to borrow must be taken by the full council (paragraph 2(4) of Schedule 1). This is a separate decision from the decision to apply for borrowing approval. Lenders will generally offer a variety of loan structures such as fixed or variable repayment rates of interest, discount or premiums for early repayment in certain circumstances.

Timing of borrowing

30. A council may borrow by temporary loan or overdraft pending the raising of the loan permitted by a borrowing approval (paragraph 2(3)(a)(ii) of Schedule 1). This means that progress on a project need not be delayed until the longer-term borrowing is arranged. See paragraph 13 above for the requirement for borrowing approval in these circumstances.

Security for the lender

31. All borrowing by a council, together with interest on it, is charged indifferently on all the revenues of the council (section 13(3)). A council cannot mortgage or charge

any of its property as security for money borrowed or which it otherwise owes; any security given in breach of this provision is unenforceable (section 13(1) and (2)).

Period of loan

32. Councils must determine the period within which the money borrowed will be repaid, and they are required to make charges to revenue account sufficient to repay the principal within that period and meet the interest charges on the borrowing (paragraphs 3 and 5 of Schedule 1). The period determined is known as the "fixed period", and the council's determination requires the consent of the Secretary of State. The borrowing approval letter will normally specify the maximum period for the repayment of the loan. The maximum period will begin on the date on which the money is borrowed, and will generally be either:

- *50 years*, for the acquisition of, or works on or to, land, buildings, roads or structures, or the making of grants for such purposes; or
- *10 years or life span of an asset*, in all other cases.

33. Councils are asked to consider carefully whether it would be appropriate to borrow for the permitted maximum or for a shorter period. Generally the borrowing period should be no greater than the period for which the expenditure is forecast to provide benefits to the council (or the body being assisted). Thus if a piece of equipment is only thought likely to last for five years, it would be more appropriate to borrow for five years than for the ten years that the borrowing approval might permit.

When a borrowing approval is no longer required

34. If a council finds it no longer needs the borrowing approval issued to it, it must inform DLUHC.

35. If a council finds that it does not need to borrow the full amount as specified in the approval letter, DLUHC should be informed of the actual loan amount as soon as is reasonably practical.

Best Practice

- Seek appropriate advice and guidance at early stage of the project.
- Programme prudent use of balances as well as borrowing.
- Budgets or revised budgets should be considered before applying for borrowing approval.
- The borrowing term should not exceed the life of the asset.
- Even if the council secures an interest free loan, it will still require borrowing approval.
- Consult local residents about the proposed project and the intention to borrow.
- Make sure residents have access to as much information as possible about the project and loan, both before and after the decision to borrow.
- If increasing precept, ensure residents are consulted on the increase and obtain evidence to support loan application.

APPENDIX A

DEFINITION OF CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

- 1 Section 16 of the 2003 Act defines "capital expenditure" as "expenditure of the authority which falls to be capitalised in accordance with proper practices". In turn section 21(2) defines "proper practices" as those accounting practices that local authorities are required to follow by virtue of any enactment, or of a code of practice or other document specified in regulations. Under this power the Secretary of State has specified (among other documents) the CIPFA/LASAAC *Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom* ("the Code"). The Code does not apply to parish councils. However, the first of the criteria set out in paragraph 24 of this guide relies on the Code's provisions to provide a definition of capital expenditure for parishes consistent with the definition applicable elsewhere in the public sector. This is done purely to ensure that all applications are judged against uniform criteria, and does not imply that the Code is in any way applicable to a parish council's accounting statements.
- 2 The key relevant paragraphs of the 2012-13 Code for the purposes of the capital expenditure definition are as follows:

4.1.2.11 Property, plant and equipment are tangible assets (ie assets with physical substance) that are held for use in the production or supply of goods and services, for rental to others, or for administrative purposes, and expected to be used during more than one period.

Recognition

4.1.2.16 The cost of an item of property, plant and equipment falling under this section of the Code shall be recognised (and hence capitalised) as an asset on a local authority Balance Sheet if, and only if:

- it is probable that the future economic benefits or service potential associated with the item will flow to the authority, and
- the cost of the item can be measured reliably.

4.1.2.17 Costs that meet the recognition principle in paragraph 4.1.2.16 include initial costs of acquisition and construction, and costs incurred subsequently to enhance, replace part of, or service the asset.

The Code goes on to exclude day-to-day servicing (ie repairs and maintenance) from the definition if they do not add to the future economic benefits or service potential of the asset.

- 3 In addition, section 16 allows the Secretary of State to adjust the definition of capital expenditure by regulation, and, in the case of a particular authority, by direction. Regulation 25 of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/3146), as amended, provides as follows:

Expenditure to be capital expenditure

25. —(1) *For the purposes of Chapter 1 of Part 1 the following expenditure of a local authority, incurred on or after 1st April 2004, shall be treated as being capital expenditure insofar as it is not capital expenditure by virtue of section 16(1) —*

(a) expenditure incurred on the acquisition or preparation of a computer program, including expenditure on the acquisition of a right to use the program, if the authority acquire or prepare the program for use for a period of at least one year for any purpose relevant to its functions;

(b) subject to paragraph (2), the giving of a loan, grant or other financial assistance to any person, whether for use by that person or by a third party, towards expenditure which would, if incurred by the authority, be capital expenditure;

(c) the repayment of any grant or other financial assistance given to the local authority for the purposes of expenditure which is capital expenditure;

(d) subject to paragraph (3) the acquisition of share capital in any body corporate;

(e) expenditure incurred on works to any land or building in which the local authority does not have an interest, which would be capital expenditure if the local authority had an interest in that land or building;

(ea) expenditure incurred on the acquisition, production or construction of assets for use by or disposal to, a person other than the local authority which would be capital expenditure if those assets were acquired produced, or constructed for use by the local authority; and

(f) the payment of any levy by a local authority under section 136 of the Leasehold Reform Housing and Urban Development Act 1993 (levy on disposals)

(2) Where the expenditure referred to in paragraph (1)(b) is a loan given by a parish council or charter trustees to any person, it shall not be treated as being capital expenditure by virtue of this regulation.

(3) Where the expenditure referred to in paragraph (1)(d) is—

(a) an investment in a money market fund; or

(b) an investment in the shares of a company to which Part 4 of the Finance Act 2006 (Real Estate Investment Trusts) applies; or

(c) the acquisition of shares in an investment scheme approved by the Treasury under section 11 (1) of the Trustee Investments Act 1961 (local authority investment schemes).

it shall not be treated as being capital expenditure by virtue of this regulation.

Parish councils should note in particular the effect of paragraph (2) of the regulation.