

14 April 2004

Gary Tuson
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King Edward VII Avenue
Cathays Park
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Dear Gary

Re: Relocation opportunities

Thank you for meeting with us recently to discuss some of the issues facing you and your colleagues as a result of the need to relocate the archive by April 2006.

We have carefully considered the *Site Options Appraisal Report* prepared by Locum Destination Consulting and the draft *Brief for a New Glamorgan Record Office* and have included our comments here, which we hope you find helpful.

Aside from our willingness to discuss our comments further we would be happy to meet with your board/steering/advisory committee and any other party you may consider relevant, as the projects progresses. In particular, although the draft brief sets out the archival and special requirements for the accommodation it does not yet carry the necessary detail to inform the contractual agreement that will underpin any new-build, refurbishment or fit-out scheme with which you may become involved.

It is important to remember that Glamorgan Record Office is essentially a tenant seeking space for its archive records, staff and for its users. This being the case it is not only important to state in the brief the archival standards, storage and environmental control specifications but absolutely crucial to specify the material and finish quality of the refurbishment/fit-out.

DCFW is particularly concerned about the nature of the brief and we would be happy to assist you in achieving the kind of document that will ensure the necessary quality. Depending on the extent of our involvement we may need to look at an appropriate fee, however we would discuss this with you first and ensure that any such arrangement is appropriate to the level of our involvement and available resources.

We have drawn attention to other aspects overleaf and we are happy to discuss these further at any time, making the considerable expertise of our members available to you.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance.

Yours sincerely

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Chief Executive

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Cc Susan Edwards – Glamorgan Archivist

DCFW
Cindy Harris – Design Review Officer
Alan Francis – Design Review Panel
Neil Taylor – Design Review Panel

1. The Site Options Appraisal Report

Section 1 of the report is adequate as an outline of the methodology as is Section 2 outlining the Objectives. Section 3, identifying options, does touch upon the business development opportunity the re-location could represent for Glamorgan Record Office however there are further partnerships which might be explored. For instance further thought should be given to University constituencies within the GRO catchments and in relation to potential income generating services that might be provided by GRO. Increased potential for audience development through such partnerships, making the archive and its resources more visible and broadening access are important to its development.

Section 3.4 – The Maltings

This option needs further consideration in terms of rigorous analysis of public transport and access issues and whether its viability is largely rooted in its extant physical structure and the presence of a potentially willing landlord. We would advise more detailed study of the site, its physical condition and its ability to meet the quality standard necessary.

Section 3.5 – Barry Waterfront

This site may indeed appear to be that which carries the greatest unknowns and the highest investment at the outset. However we would warn against ruling this site out as it does offer the possibility of a snag free purpose built premises, which might attract partnership support. The WDA should at least be consulted further on this site along with the Vale of Glamorgan Council and the potential for GRO to become a catalyst for culture led regeneration should not be underestimated.

Slightly increased investment at the outset could bring greater return in the long term, not least in the form of a new, purpose built home for GRO.

Section 3.6 St Catherine’s Corner Pontypridd

As stated in the report, this site and the quality of the current development proposal are not compatible with the requirements and without significant changes we would find it difficult to see how it could be appropriate. Its town centre location has advantages as does its proximity to the University for Glamorgan however a significant urban design exercise and series of public realm improvements would be necessary to make the site attractive and accessible. At present this seems unlikely.

Section 3.7 Cardiff Central Library Building

This site should be very carefully considered given its position, existing occupier and function and the impact of its refurbishment/ alterations as part of the planned redevelopment of the city centre. The transport assessment needs further attention in light of the development proposal and no assumptions should be made at this stage.

Recommendations

1. Whilst the site report outlines the possibilities we strongly urge GRO to enlist the skills of an experienced architect and quantity surveyor to investigate the possibilities further. DCFW will be happy to facilitate an appropriate process to assist such a selection in order that a detailed assessment of spatial and other needs be carried out. We do not consider that this has been carried out in sufficient detail so far. An accurate generic plan devised by an experienced architect is essential as is a detailed assessment of the specification required in the Brief in terms of both quality and financial commitment.
2. In particular we consider it important that GRO consult a specialist fundraising body specialising in revenue and capital projects of a cultural nature.

These two points are crucial, firstly in achieving a brief which is of use in terms of contractual status when it comes to procuring a new or refurbished premises and identifying the balance of responsibility and risk apportioned between GRO as tenant and their landlord and her/his refurbishment contractor team.

Secondly the profile of GRO and its income generation potential have not been explored in any depth and currently a fatalistic assumption that this potential is limited, could be clouding development opportunities and cloaking GRO's potential as a regeneration catalyst and therefore valuable asset to any site.

End