

Heritage Works Buildings Preservation Trust Ltd

Everton Library: “The Jewel on the Hill”

Phase 2 options appraisal study

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

1.1 This executive summary provides a precis of a phase 2 options appraisal study in relation to Everton Library, which follows on from an initial options appraisal study completed by Heritage Works Buildings Preservation Trust in April 2009. This phase 2 options appraisal study, again commissioned by Liverpool City Council,:

- identifies a number of potential end-uses within an overall vision for the project,
- relates the project to the developmental and policy context
- gives an initial assessment of the viability of, and the risks associated with, the proposed end-uses,
- includes updated design work and, as far as possible, cost information,
- comments on indicative revenue costs and income,
- identifies a number of potential sources of capital and revenue funding,
- comments on implementation issues, and
- recommends a number of next steps.

The study does not include in-depth demand and viability assessment for the proposed end-uses, and the updated cost information would require a further Condition Survey before accurately reflecting present repair costs.

1.2 Consultation has been wide ranging, and sincere thanks are due to the many organisations and individuals, including Council officers, a Ward Councillor, and key stakeholders, who have contributed their time and thoughts.

Context

1.3 The study outlines the extent of the challenges facing North Liverpool in general and Everton Ward in particular by referring to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007. Despite the extremity of deprivation in the area, there are grounds for optimism in major plans for the Everton Park area, which have already begun to come to fruition, and which, taken together, will amount to some £400 million investment. Projected developments in North Liverpool as a whole over the medium to long-term are also very significant.

1.4 In terms of the policy context, the study outlines a number of key documents that are relevant to the proposed Everton Library project, particularly the emerging **North Liverpool Strategic Regeneration Framework, Liverpool Heritage Investment Framework 2007, Liverpool Cultural Strategy 2009-2014, Liverpool Vision’s People, Places and Prosperity: An Economic Prospectus Liverpool 2024, Liverpool City Region Development Plan**, and the emerging **RS2010 Regional Strategy for England’s Northwest**.

Everton Library and its heritage

1.5 The study emphasises the iconic nature of Everton Library as a building, with its late Victorian eclectic Jacobean/Arts and Crafts design style, and points to its striking location on Beacon Hill, one of the highest points in the City of Liverpool. The site has historical

associations going back to the English Civil War and beyond, and panoramic views over the City Centre, the Mersey Estuary and the distant Welsh Hills. The building contributes greatly to the sense of place of this part of North Liverpool, and there is undoubtedly strong support in the local community for the restoration and re-use of the Library.

Project vision and aims

- 1.6 Given the building's uniqueness, aesthetic qualities, geographical position, historical resonances and community meaning, the study suggests the strapline "**The Jewel on the Hill**" as a key part of the proposed vision. The description of the restored and re-used Everton Library as "**a dynamic local centre for creativity, heritage and enterprise, linking tradition and modernity in a new and exciting mix**" then completes the vision statement.

Proposed end-uses

- 1.7 The study describes six complementary end-use options which comprise the vision for Everton Library as a mixed-use facility, and which can all be accommodated within the building envelope, apart from external new-build facilities to augment the internal heritage skills training activities.
- 1.8 The first proposed end-use is that of **creative enterprise workspace**. This could involve up to ten workspace units which could be used as either office or studio space, or a mixture of both, and ranging from 225 sq.ft to 753 sq.ft. in size. It is envisaged that these spaces would be rented by small creative enterprises, using a broad definition of 'creative enterprise' to include advertising, architecture, art, craft, design and through to digital industries. Such micro-enterprises would also be able to benefit, at a cost, from other spaces in the building to be used as exhibition and performance space, and also from a small cafe operation.
- 1.9 Reasons for this proposed end-use include the high growth nature of this sector, and the 'fit' both with Liverpool's strong cultural emphasis and with enterprise development objectives in North Liverpool. Cautious support has been expressed by creative sector bodies for lower cost, out of city centre workspace with the right facilities mix. There may be potential for a market niche for creative enterprise based on the interface between heritage and contemporary arts, as well as the possibility of exciting linkages between this and other proposed end-uses.
- 1.10 Demand is difficult to assess in this sector, and has been made more difficult by the economic downturn. There are indications that demand for such workspace may be re-asserting itself after the recession, with a possible deficit of such workspace over the next period. There may however be trends in the other direction, such as an increase in homeworking by creatives. Looking ahead three years to the first date by which the proposed project could be completed, there are grounds for a positive demand assessment in the proposed cost range, but demand issues need to be the subject of further project development work at the next stage. Lack of take-up is one of the risks associated with this option, and the study outlines ways of attempting to address this and other risks.
- 1.11 The second proposed end-use of part of the building is as a **built heritage and conservation skills learning centre**. This would involve the use of the lower ground floor and a new-build external training compound as a small sub-regional centre of excellence for built heritage and conservation crafts, possibly part of the construction learning operation of one of the major Merseyside colleges, potentially offering a range of

trade, professional, short, and taster courses in such craft areas as stonework and masonry, heritage metalwork, lime plastering and various others.

- 1.12 Reasons for this proposed end-use include evidenced skills gaps in such craft areas both nationally and regionally, also confirmed by the small consultation sample undertaken for the study, together with a perceived gap in such training provision in the Merseyside sub-region. There is a clear 'fit' between this proposed end-use and the heritage nature of the building. Such a centre could make a contribution to upskilling residents of North Liverpool and Merseyside in general, and there could also be exciting linkages with other proposed end-uses. There has been positive consultation with Liverpool Community College and with the National Conservation Centre, Liverpool, and it is thought that there is potential for a continued dialogue with the College as the project develops. Again, the study indicates ways of attempting to address the risks associated with this option.
- 1.13 The third proposed end-use is as a **community cultural activity hub**. This would involve a facilitated programme of cultural events and activities involving local communities, together with building the capacity of local groups to develop activities in the cultural field. It would also involve building partnerships between local communities in North Liverpool and key arts and cultural organisations in the city. The main use of Everton Library would be the use of the building's main public exhibition, performance and meeting spaces for activities, with a facilitational cultural worker being based at the Library.
- 1.14 Reasons for this proposed end-use would be to continue the work already started by Liverpool Arts and Regeneration Consortium in the area, to place community engagement firmly at the forefront of what the restored Library is about, and to realise the exciting potential of such an activity programme interacting with both creative enterprises and heritage-related uses of the building. The building is both iconic and striking, and is an ideal location for such a community cultural activity hub at the heart of the community. There is a strong 'fit' with the Liverpool Cultural Strategy's objectives of increasing participation by local communities in cultural activity. The study indicates ways of addressing the risks associated with this option.
- 1.15 The fourth proposed end-use is as a **local heritage resource**. This would involve the organisation of displays and exhibitions, together with supported access to IT-based genealogical research, and would mainly involve the use of the centre's public exhibition, performance and meeting spaces. Its focus would be on the heritage and history of North Liverpool, both in terms of its distant history and the more recent period of modern urban development. It could possibly also include the development of an archive of local history material, together with related projects.
- 1.16 Reasons for this proposed end-use include the place of heritage in developing the pride and self-respect of local communities, the strong 'fit' between this end-use and the heritage significance of the building, the potential for partnerships with National Museums Liverpool and Liverpool City Council Libraries, and the contribution this end-use could make as part of developing heritage tourism in North Liverpool. Again, there are potentially exciting linkages between this local heritage strand and other proposed end-uses. And again, the study indicates ways of addressing the risks associated with this option.
- 1.17 The fifth proposed end-use is that of an **enterprise education partnership**, involving the use of part of the building for an enterprise education programme for secondary students, to be run by North Liverpool Academy, possibly in conjunction with other interested schools in the area. It would require an IT-equipped education suite which could be used for other purposes outside school hours, and it could have a primary focus on students

specialising in creative subjects (art, design, performance, digital and media) with a view to encouraging self-employment and enterprise.

- 1.18 A key reason for this proposed end-use is that it is understood that North Liverpool Academy requires further space for enterprise education and the institution is keen to realise the potential of co-location of such a function within the creative context offered by the restored Library. Moreover, there may be the potential for other uses by the Academy for events and programmes with a family focus. As with each of the other proposed end-uses, the study indicates ways of addressing the risks associated with this option.
- 1.19 The final proposed end-use is for **cafe/exhibition-meetings-performance spaces**. This has already been referred to in relation to a number of other options, and would involve the use of the former Main Reading Room and Boys' Reading Room to accommodate events, small performances, exhibitions and community cultural activities. Depending on final design, the former Boys' Reading Room might possibly also serve for part of the time as an education suite. The utilisation of these spaces for such an end-use is a critical element in supporting the viability of a number of the end-uses outlined above, and the former Main Reading Room, itself a large, aesthetically striking space, would be ideal for such activities. A small cafe operation is regarded as essential to service centre occupiers and users. Again, the study indicates ways of addressing the risks associated with this option.
- 1.20 Market advice on a number of the above options has been provided by Keppie Massie Chartered Surveyors. This broadly supports the proposed end-uses outlined but draws attention to the risks inherent in them.

Management and governance

- 1.21 The kind of end uses proposed in the study as part of an overall, mixed-use facility require a facility management structure which is unified, integrated and pro-active, and which will need to deliver more than a basic level of service. In order to realise its full potential, the centre will require a small management team, led by a centre manager skilled in facility management, finance, programme development and negotiation.
- 1.22 In terms of governance, the study suggests that neither a private sector operator nor the present owner, Liverpool City Council, would wish to directly operate such a facility. It therefore suggests that a third sector management structure is more appropriate, (i.e. a social enterprise or not-for-profit trust), with the precise legal structure to be determined at a later stage. This might be a new organisation, or an existing organisation whose terms of reference could encompass the operation of such a facility.

Project benefits to the community

- 1.23 The study identifies a number of benefits to the community, including:
- supporting and stimulating the growth of creative enterprises in the area,
 - training North Liverpool people and people from the wider Merseyside sub-region in built heritage skills,
 - stimulating the development of cultural activity in the local community,
 - developing and spreading an awareness of the heritage of the North Liverpool area among local communities, and
 - removing the blight of the currently empty and vandalised building.

Project benefits to the heritage of the City of Liverpool and City Region

1.24 The study identifies a number of benefits to heritage, including:

- repairing and restoring this late Victorian public library building which has heritage significance in terms of its design, its place in the development of Liverpool's public library system, and its resonance as a key landmark building in a historic location,
- contributing to the revival and re-establishment of built heritage skills in the Merseyside sub-region, and
- developing a dynamic focus for the celebration and dissemination of knowledge of the heritage of the North Liverpool area.

Design

1.25 The study adopts the earlier principles for dealing with disabled access and internal circulation, including a platform lift to the main entrance on Saint Domingo Road, a central 'atrium' with stairs and lifts serving all floors, and a modification to the original staircase at the 'turret' entrance to accommodate a lift down to the lower ground floor. There is also a small extension to the north end of the building to deal with fire escape issues, and to connect to the car park.

1.26 The lower ground floor would provide accommodation for the conservation skills learning centre, with training rooms being created in spaces originally designed for workshop and adult education use. The main access to the lower ground floor would be via the main entrance and foyer area on the upper ground floor, so encouraging interaction between all users of the centre. An external compound for the skills centre is proposed, with craft workshops for different trades / enterprises. There is also car parking for, say, 24 cars, to serve the whole building and open space safeguarded for future expansion.

1.27 The upper ground floor provides the 'public' areas of the building. The central foyer would include a reception desk and orientation point. The Main Reading Room would be designated as a multi-purpose space for exhibitions, performances, café (with small catering kitchen), education, local history resources etc. The Boys' Reading Room would service education, seminar, community, history resource or other uses. Office accommodation on this level could include the centre manager's accommodation, and also a 'hot desk' area or managed workspace unit.

1.28 On the mezzanine level would be three units, and also potential for a gallery / display / meeting space built as an extension to the original book gallery around the Main Reading Room. On the first floor, accommodation includes an education suite, although these rooms may also be used as lettable offices or studios. There would be three further offices /studios and a small external terrace on what is currently a flat roof. These studios, which will potentially have a fully glazed wall to the southeast side, will command wonderful views.

Project capital costs

1.29 Appleyard and Trew Quantity Surveyors have prepared indicative costs for the design described above. The figures in table 1.1 below relate to construction costs only. The repairs cost given is the same as that estimated for the Options Appraisal Study in April 2009 because that is the only figure available until a further Condition Survey and cost estimating exercise can be carried out, taking into account the vandalism which the building has suffered over the past year, and its consequent further deterioration. **It must**

be noted that the accurate repair cost estimate will be substantially higher than that given in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Construction costs

Repairs	1,700,000
Basement (training rooms/offices)	370,000
Upper floors (communal space/offices)	540,000
North elevation extension (circulation)	250,000
Roof top extension (offices)	300,000
External craft training lodges and compound	238,000
Car park and landscaping	78,000
Construction cost	£3,476,000

1.30 To the above costs a number of non-construction cost items must be added, as summarised in Table 1.2. These include items such as design team fees, specialist survey costs, and statutory fees. It is assumed that the City Council will wish to dispose of the Library building and the adjacent site(s) to facilitate the development and an estimated acquisition price is given, although this may vary following the Condition Survey referenced in 1.24 above. The local authority has, however, the power to dispose of an authority-owned heritage asset on a long lease to a charitable organisation for a nominal sum in return for an alternative consideration, such as full repair of the building, which could be relevant in this case.

Table 1.2: Project costs including construction costs, fees and acquisition costs

Construction costs	3,476,000
Professional fees at 20%	695,200
Statutory fees	20,000
Total fees	4,191,200
Acquisition cost	50,000
Grand total	£4,241,200

1.31 Depending on the delivery method adopted, a project management fee may be added. Project management could be undertaken by Liverpool City Council, but the level of the authority's fee is not known so is not given as an option in Table 1.3. If the project is managed by a not-for-profit organisation, a project management fee of around 10% of contract sum should be applied to cover staff costs. This option is given in Table 3.

Table 1.3: Total project costs including project management fees

Grand total	4,241,200
Project management fee 10%	347,600
Total including project management	£4,588,800

Project income and expenditure issues

1.32 It is clear from valuations prepared by Keppie Massie Chartered Surveyors that the maximum annual rental income from occupiers of the restored building is unlikely to exceed a range of £53,000-£61,000, and that would be dependent on full occupation and utilisation of lettable meeting/exhibition/performance space, which is unlikely particularly in the first phase of operation. An indicative projection of annual staff costs could be in

the region of £91,000, and to this would need to be added insurances, office overheads including telephone, travel and other necessary expenses, marketing, heat, light, power, and building maintenance, which is likely to be considerable.

- 1.33 The study's conclusion is that the restored Everton Library would operate at a deficit, despite the rental income that could derive from occupiers. Because of the constraints of the building it would not be possible to increase the number of occupiers. If the current scheme is to be progressed, consideration would have to be given to achieving an annual revenue grant or other income to bridge the deficit. A number of potential sources of revenue funding are outlined and each would need to be approached. A major risk is that, if no additional income of this nature could be achieved, then the project would be unable to proceed.

Capital funding sources

- 1.34 The study outlines a number of possible capital funding sources. A significant element of the capital costs could be eligible for **Heritage Lottery Fund** and feedback from that source indicated positive potential, subject to a number of issues being resolved. Other potential sources could include the **Stepclever** programme, **European Regional Development Fund** (in the event of a further bidding round being launched), **North West Development Agency** (if funding was to be committed to North Liverpool at a future date), and the **Big Lottery Fund**. In addition, the study suggests approaches to **business** sources, **Registered Social Landlords** working in the area, and **Liverpool City Council**. The study also outlines a number of **charitable trusts** which could have potential to make capital grants, together with the **Landfill Communities Fund**.

Revenue funding sources

- 1.35 The study outlines a number of possible revenue funding sources, including **Arts Council England (North West)**, **Big Lottery Fund**, **Heritage Lottery Fund** and a **charitable trust**. Approaches are also suggested in relation to the **Learning and Skills Council**, **Liverpool City Council** and **business** sources.

Implementation issues

- 1.36 The study overviews a number of implementation issues, including the need for further project development work, the consideration of possible options for project management, and a projected timescale, according to which project completion could be expected, if all went well, in the spring/early summer of 2013.

Conclusions and recommended next steps

- 1.37 The study sets out a vision for the restoration and re-use of Everton Library that is coherent and inspirational. A number of interlinked end-uses have been proposed which the study team believes can work together to develop a creative 'critical mass' in the restored facility, and which can bring significant community and wider benefit. A management structure is proposed to provide effective facility management and to realise the potential synergies that could flow from the project. A positive view is taken in relation to certain capital funding sources. The projected revenue deficit is clearly a key concern which will require further work, and other risks are outlined, as well as ways of addressing them. Overall, the study team believes that the project as outlined has the best chance of achieving significant community benefit and the repair and restoration of Everton Library.

1.38 The report recommends a series of 'next steps', as follows:

- A stage one Heritage Lottery Fund bid should be submitted as early as possible in the process, and urgent action should be undertaken to resolve those key issues which need to be addressed before the stage one submission,
- In view of the damage suffered by the building over the past year, a new Condition Survey is required, together with a cost estimating exercise, to ascertain how the costs will have risen,
- Further project development work is required in relation to the proposed end uses, including work on demand issues and market analysis, business planning, securing capital and revenue funding, and partnership development,
- This executive summary should be made available to the public through a number of relevant websites, and consideration should be given to establishing a website for Everton Library itself,
- Consideration should be given to the possibility of establishing a local 'Friends of Everton Library' group to help to generate interest in and support for the project.