

Werneth Park Music Rooms (Conservatory in the Park)

Project Viability Report/Appraisal – Brief

Background

GMBPT

The Greater Manchester Building Preservation Trust (GMBPT) was registered as a Charity and Limited Company in 2004. Its aims are to restore buildings of architectural and historical interest (particularly those 'at Risk') in the ten Boroughs of Greater Manchester.

GMBPT is currently working in partnership with Oldham Council, acting as Charitable Trustee, and the Werneth Music Rooms Steering Group, to deliver the sustainable re-use of the Werneth Music Rooms (Werneth Park, Oldham). GMBPT wishes to commission a Project Viability Report/appraisal to investigate the feasibility of undertaking the repair, conversion and upgrading of these important buildings. It requires professional advice to assist in developing and appraising a set of options which will identify the most beneficial use of the building for the benefit of Oldham.

Werneth Music Rooms

Werneth Music Rooms is a complex of derelict Grade II Listed Buildings described as the 'Conservatory in the Park' on Historic England's Register under List Entry Number: 1201653. The buildings are located on the North Eastern edge of Werneth Park, adjacent to Frederick Street. The site is shown edged in red on the attached plan (see Appendix 1).

Designed in 1906 by Heywood and Ogden, for Sarah Lees, it was completed shortly after the demolition of the original house built by the Platt family in 1860 and many of the original features were salvaged following the demolition. It has strong local significance given its association with the Platt and Lees families.

The music room complex comprises 5 main elements:

- A single storey reception suite which is brick built with stone details, and has a flat roof over the perimeter spaces, with an octagonal slated roof over the principal reception area. The front elevation has a projecting portico with columns and pilasters and a parapet, flanking this are double height bays
- A double height rectangular auditorium which is brick built with a slate roof
- A glazed conservatory which fills the angle between the auditorium and the reception suite
- A glazed fernery to the immediate west of the conservatory
- To the rear of the auditorium are service areas including an entrance lodge, yards, and a boiler house

Werneth Park along with the Music Rooms was gifted to the Council on the 8th January 1936, by Dame Marjory Lees. The Council consequently holds the park and

its associated buildings in Trust and this is registered with the Charity Commission under Registered Number 521273 (described as Werneth Park).

A series of initiatives to restore and bring the buildings back into use were explored between 2002 and 2009 primarily under the Government's SRB6 initiative. Unfortunately, none of the initiatives resulted in grant funding being made available, primarily due to the country's economic circumstances and the withdrawal of major regeneration funding programmes. A feasibility study was commissioned in February 1996 for the Music Rooms (see Appendix 2). This study provides valuable background information regarding the building.

The Vision

To identify and secure a viable and sustainable use for the vacant Werneth Music Rooms building.

In order to achieve the above it will be necessary to commission a consultant to produce an options appraisal and initial viability assessment. In addition to appraising options for the future of the building, it will also look at developing ownership options and undertaking models of community engagement.

Specifically, the work will involve assessing whether a proposed use for the building would be viable, by looking at a series of agreed options using a high-level semi structured approach used to appraise each option against criteria relating to Strategic Contribution, Financial Assessment, Deliverability, and Architectural Quality.

A key element will be to assess project viability through a 'viability appraisal' looking at both the costs and values of each option. As part of the project delivery element of the report, a Steering Group structure will be recommended, along with a sustainable Business Plan.

The Challenge

Investment in the recreational facilities in the Werneth area is important to the quality and enjoyment of life of the residents. The area exhibits a series of challenging economic indicators in relation to both the Borough of Oldham and the UK.

According to the 2018 Werneth Ward Profile (Appendix 3), the area has:

- Very low employment figures, and high Out of Work Benefits being issued. The level of employment suggests a high level of economic inactivity.
- Very poor adult qualifications.
- A relatively high percentage (36.8%) of all adults do not have any qualifications.
- Residents with short life expectancy, which is one of the poorest in Oldham, coupled with the ward's high percentage of residents with Long term health issues, being amongst the highest statistics for the borough.

Community engagement will be key in providing a sustainable use for the building and surrounding area. The ideas of the community will form the basis for the

identification of the most appropriate options to be tested and will provide the baseline for further funding applications to implement the preferred solution.

Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF) Objectives

As AHF is a co-funder of this commission, the project will need to meet the AHF objectives relating to supporting communities, attracting investment, start-up of new enterprises, and delivering a well-managed historic environment. The project viability report/appraisal will help deliver the AHF 'Theory of Change' model and provide benefits to the community through:

- Enabling the establishment of a formal legal structure for the Steering Group to access funding and undertake any other necessary legal agreements
- Development of a robust and self-sustaining business plan

When the Music Rooms were gifted to the Council as part of Werneth Park, the Council made a declaration to “preserve the same at all times hereafter as an open space to be known as Werneth Park for the recreation and enjoyment of the people of Oldham in such manner and subject to such regulations in all respect as the Council of the Corporation may from time to time think proper but so only such buildings may be erected thereupon as will add to the existing amenities of the said Park.”

Given this, the Council, acting as Charitable Trustee of the Trust, will need to be satisfied that any proposed new use of the Music Rooms fulfils this objective. If there are no viable options which would fulfil the objective, then the Trustees would have to consider an application to the Charity Commission for a Cy-pres scheme and or an order for sale.

Required Services

GMBPT requires a Project Viability Report/Appraisal for the Werneth Music Rooms that:

- Identifies and assesses three detailed options for the sustainable end use of the buildings, which will form the basis for detailed discussions with the Local Planning Authority, Historic England, and any other relevant statutory and funding bodies (other rejected options should be listed and reasons given for their rejection);
- Assesses the financial and non-financial benefits of each of the options through Multi Criteria Analysis;
- Recommends a preferred option, and the provision of a more detailed costs and benefits report to support the preferred option;
- A delivery plan which would identify:
 - The likely sources of funds for the project, which will form the basis for discussions with principal funders to ascertain their conditions and timescales and the likelihood of assistance;
 - The long-term financial viability and sustainability of the buildings in relation to the proposed end use;

- A financial assessment of the proposal including a cash flow statement for the capital phase, showing an approximate working capital requirement, its cost and security; and
- An implementation strategy, setting out the next steps, and Partner responsibilities.

Importantly, the options produced need to be sustainable and economically viable, with the likely conservation deficit indicated for each option.

AHF has provided guidance on the format of the completed report/appraisal (see Appendix 4). The report/appraisal, therefore, needs to adhere to this guidance.

It is anticipated that in order to complete the requisite report/appraisal, the following services will be required:

- A lead conservation accredited architectural consultancy - given the important architectural status and challenges the buildings will present (an understanding of these issues is key);
- Valuation expertise - to assess the end value of each of the presented options and details of the preferred option, for input into development appraisals;
- Cost consultancy services - to identify the costs of the presented options for input into development appraisals; and
- Business planning consultants - to produce a business plan for the preferred option.
- Other professionals that are deemed necessary for the report/appraisal.

Budget

A maximum of £15,000 has been put aside for this commission.

Programme: It is anticipated that the Report/Appraisal will be completed within 2 months of appointment. A draft report will be required prior to this deadline for review and comment by the AHF. The conclusions and recommendations will also need to be agreed between the Steering Group, the Trustees of the Music Rooms and the lead professional for distillation into the final report.

Timetable

Key Tasks	Date to be completed by
Tender documents circulated	14 June 2019
Tender Return Date	28 June 2019
Evaluation of Responses	3 Jul 2019
Preferred consultant selection / notification (including notification & feedback to unsuccessful consultants)	4 Jul 2019
Award of Commission	8 July 2019

Commencement of Commission	10 July 2019
Draft report submitted for review	21 Aug 2019
Final report submitted	6 September 2019

Reporting

The lead professional appointed will be required to liaise with and report regularly to John Miller (john.miller@htnw.co.uk) of the GMBPT, and Brian Enright (brian.enright@oldham.gov.uk) of Oldham Council. When the appraisal report is available in draft, the professional team will be required to present the findings to GMBPT, and representatives from Oldham Council, the Steering Group and Trustees of the Music Rooms.

Access

Arrangements should be made through Mark Elton at Oldham Council on 0161 707 1443.

Presentation of information

All rights, including copyright to the detail of the designs, including recommendations and costs, whether in writing or electronic form, must be assigned to the Greater Manchester Building Preservation Trust and Oldham Borough Council at the final report stage. Intellectual copyright will remain with the original author. 5 copies of the final report and appendices should be provided in both electronic and bound hard copy A4 format with reduction drawings bound into the document. Hard copies of your submission should be sent to:

Greater Manchester Building Preservation Trust

The Edgar Woods Centre

Long Street Methodist Church

Lever Street

Middleton

M24 5UE