

Mechanics' Institute Viability Assessment

Mechanics' Institution Trust

February 2020

FINAL



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1 Executive Summary

Fourth Street, in partnership with Donald Insall Associates¹ and Ian Walker Associates², was commissioned by the Mechanics' Institution Trust³ in August 2019 (with funding support from the Architectural Heritage Fund and Theatres Trust) to undertake a viability assessment for the Mechanics' Institute. This commission followed a series of studies⁴, undertaken over several years, that appraised a wide range of possible uses for the building and alighted on a shortlist of *Theatre/Performance/Arts*, *Higher Education (including R&D)* and *Business/Conference*. The results of the study are summarised in this executive summary; discussed and presented in greater detail within the main body of this report (Sections 2 to 8); and supported by further information and analysis contained in the accompanying appendices.

The combination of the market assessment, stakeholder consultations and building appraisal revealed a preferred option that proposes the Mechanics' Institute's restoration and revival into a high quality, multi-purpose events venue. This responds to the partners' strategic aims and objectives while offering a solution that has a high probability of being funded and the strong potential to become financially viable in operation.

Key to its long-term financial viability in operation will be its attractiveness and suitability for staging meetings, conferences and wedding events. These will be the commercial bedrock that underpins its operational financial viability and enables it to operate as a multi-purpose venue, with a broader supporting range of arts, cultural, education and community programming. The capacity of the spaces and their offers will be designed to complement those available at STEAM, widening the appeal of this part of Swindon for events and growing the market overall.

It is assumed that Swindon Borough Council will facilitate the building's acquisition and transfer to a third party. We have assumed that the third party could be the Mechanics' Institution Trust, but it is recognised by the project partners that significant capacity building will be required. This has been identified as an area where the National Trust, being headquartered nearby, could provide substantial support on an interim basis.

Once established and running, the new business is projected to generate an annual operating surplus in year 3 of £131k, and an accumulated 10 year surplus of £840k.

¹ Conservation architects

² Quantity surveyor

³ For consistency throughout this report, the term "Mechanics' Institution Trust" refers to the organisation and "Mechanics' Institute" refers to the building.

⁴ Inspiring Swindon – the Restoration of the Mechanics' Institution, an Outline Report for Swindon Borough Council by The Mechanics' Institution Trust, November 2012; Options Assessment by Metropolitan Workshop in 2015 for Forward Swindon; Funding Proposals, Project Portfolio and Future Plans for the Mechanics' Institution, Swindon by Bearwood Associates Ltd on Behalf of the Mechanics' Institution Trust (supported by Architectural Heritage Fund), August 2016; Structural Engineering Appraisal of the Form and Condition of the Existing Structure by Alan Baxter Ltd for Forward Swindon, 2015; Future Use Options Appraisal by Forward Swindon, 2017.

A conservation approach has been developed that seeks to preserve, as far as practical, those aspects which have been designated of high significance. As such, it is proposed to restore the principal Theatre and Reading Rooms without any sub-division. This approach responds to the outline statement of significance previously prepared by Alan Baxter Associates and reflects the importance of the building's cultural value.

The idea of the building's sensitive re-use has received support from Historic England, Swindon Borough Council and other consultee bodies such as the Theatres Trust and the Council's conservation and planning officers.

The estimated capital cost for implementing the scheme described in Section 6, at today's tender values, is estimated to be £24.5m. This includes a provision for pedestrianising part of Emlyn Square (£321k excluding risk, preliminaries, professional fees and VAT), which should fall outside of the Mechanics' Institute budget (or at least, be shared across other infrastructure business cases) and the inclusion of VAT (£4m), some of which may be recoverable depending on the procurement strategy.

A delivery programme from beginning of the design development process to practical completion covers an overall duration of four and a half years. Added to this, however, will be the time necessary to secure ownership of the building and to raise the necessary capital funds.

An option to phase the delivery of the scheme has been considered. However, the value of works that would form a second phase have been costed at only £3m, meaning that the large majority of expenditure and works would still need to be carried out in the first phase. In addition, there would be a significant additional capital cost for slipping and separating the second phase of work, as well as negative impact on the operating performance of the trading business and continuing negative perceptions from the community for only partly completing the works.

A capital funding strategy has been prepared, which proposes a funding mix that is catalysed by a successful grant award from the National Lottery Heritage Fund's Horizon programme (assumed at around £9m). The timing of the next application window has yet to be confirmed but the probability of securing a NLHF Horizon award is considered reasonable. However, if this were not successful, the chances of securing a smaller NLHF grant, of up to £5m (from their main capital grants programme), is considered high given the nature of the project and the wide support from relevant local and national agencies.

The actions listed in Figure 1 below have been identified by Fourth Street and the Project Steering Group and form the basis of the short- to medium-term action plan for the Mechanics' Institute, following the completion and issue of this final report.

Figure 1: Future actions for stakeholders

#	Action	Who	Timescale	Budget
1	Complete condition survey and detailed cost plan for the Mechanics' Institute	Christians Ltd., commissioned by Swindon Borough Council (Mark Walker)	Completed by Feb-20	Within existing budgets (but to be costed as part of the building's sunk investment)
2	Prepare press release confirming the conclusion of the viability assessment and condition survey work and the conclusions and next steps arising	Led by Swindon Borough Council (Mark Walker)	Mar-20	Within existing budgets
3	Prepare co-ordinated engagement plan for potential partners and funders of the project and implement e.g. National Lottery Heritage Fund, National Trust, Historic England, Local Enterprise Partnership, Architectural Heritage Fund, Theatres Trust, Pilgrims Trust etc. This is assumed to include engagement at officer and director levels, and through this process, letters of support should be sought.	Led by Swindon Borough Council (Mark Walker) in liaison with other project partners	Complete version 1 of plan in Mar-20 and begin implementing immediately	Within existing partner budgets (but to be costed as part of the building's sunk investment)
4	Produce Schedule of urgent works arising from the completed survey works	Led by Swindon Borough Council (Mark Walker)	Three months, assumed from Mar-20 to May-20	TBC
5	Seek commitment from Swindon Borough Council to underwrite the minimum investment required to address the listed and statutory requirements for the building – which are assumed to include a combination of one-off capital cost items (identified through the condition survey and subsequent schedules of work) and ongoing revenue costs such as security, inspections, utilities etc. This may require an outline business case to be prepared.	Led by Swindon Borough Council (Mark Walker)	Jun-20 (noting that council elections are to be held in May-20)	Within existing budgets
6	Seek organisational capacity building support for the Mechanics' Institution Trust from various sources including, but not limited to, National Trust.	Mechanics' Institution Trust (David Thackray)	From Mar-20 onwards	Within existing budgets

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#	Action	Who	Timescale	Budget
7	Seek specialist advice on the recovery of VAT from the proposed capital works (which is currently costed at c.£4m).	Led by Swindon Borough Council (Mark Walker) in liaison with other project partners	From Mar-20 onwards	Within existing budgets
8	Continue to serve notices as required on the building's owner for urgent repair and other necessary requirements	Led by Swindon Borough Council (Mark Walker) in liaison with Historic England (Simon Hickman)	Ongoing as required	Within existing budgets (but to be costed as part of the building's sunk investment)
9	Assuming no response from the owner to notices served, Swindon Borough Council could make use of its standing as a local authority to ensure that the building is sold	Led by Swindon Borough Council (Mark Walker) in liaison with Historic England (Simon Hickman)	Estimated to be around Aug-20	TBC

2 Introduction

2.1 About this report

Fourth Street, in partnership with Donald Insall Associates⁵ and Ian Walker Associates⁶, was commissioned by the Mechanics' Institution Trust in August 2019 (with funding support from the Architectural Heritage Fund and Theatres Trust) to undertake a viability assessment for the Mechanics' Institute.

This report and its supporting appendices present the results and recommendations arising.

Fourth Street would like to thank all those that have contributed to the study.

2.2 Work undertaken

The Fourth Street team has undertaken the following tasks:

- Inception and follow up meetings with the project steering group;
- One-to-one stakeholder consultations (Section 3.1 and Appendix 1);
- Attendance and presentation at the Mechanics' Institution Trust's public engagement event on 14th October 2019 at The Platform and at the National Trust staff meeting on 25th November 2019;
- On-line public survey to glean the views and opinions of local residents (see Section 3.2 and Appendix 11);
- Review of the principal use options and other commercial and cultural uses, as defined by the study brief (see Section 4).
- Review of the strategic context (see Appendix 7)
- Review of the local development context (see Appendix 8);
- Market analysis covering local population demographics and relevant supply-side assessment for each of the principal use options (see Appendix 9 and 10);
- Site visits to Mechanics' Institute (external visual inspection only), the Carriage Works, The Workshed, Central Community Centre, The Baker's Café, Railway Village Museum, the Heritage Action Zone and various sites and facilities across Swindon (including the library, Health Hydro, former Town Hall, Wyvern theatre and shopping centres);
- Review of building's history, uses, historic plans, area schedule, surveys, imagery and videos (see Appendix 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6).

⁵ Conservation architects

⁶ Quantity surveyor

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- Articulation of a new vision for the building's transformation, in the context of the wider heritage action zone, together with a conservation philosophy and approach, and spatial brief (see Section 5)
- Preparation of a detailed capital cost model and funding strategy (see Section 6 and Appendix 12)
- Preparation of an indicative delivery programme (see Section 7)
- Preparation of an outline business plan and operational financial projections covering a 10 year period (see Section 8)

3 Consultation and Engagement Summary

Fourth Street has consulted on a one-to-one basis with over thirty individuals and organisations as part of the baseline assessment (see Appendix 1 for list). We also received 145 responses to the on-line public survey and engaged over one hundred people through the meetings organised by the Mechanics' Institution Trust and the National Trust.

3.1 Summary of stakeholder consultation

The one-to-one consultations have engaged a broad range of professional and community stakeholders and have been valuable in providing our team with background and contextual insight on the Mechanics' Institute, raising issues and concerns, and voicing ideas and suggestions for its future. The common themes and salient points raised through the consultation are noted below.

3.1.1 Diverse views and opinion

The consultations have confirmed that there are a broad and diverse range of views and opinions about the Mechanics' Institute and its future, and that sometimes these conflict. It is inevitable that a solution for the building will not be able to satisfy all stakeholder demands or concerns. There will have to be compromise and a recognition of trade-offs.

3.1.2 Public access

For some, the restoration must be largely focused on enabling public access to and activity within the building and should directly reflect the historic roles and functions of the Mechanics' Institute. For others, there is a strong belief that finding a viable long-term solution for its restoration should be the principal concern, even if that means the uses do not reflect the Mechanics' Institute's historic activities or fail to permit full physical public access.

3.1.3 Strong desire and 'will' for restoration

Notwithstanding the divergent views, there appears to be universal frustration that the building has fallen into such dereliction and a strong desire and 'will' expressed, from all quarters, to see it restored once and for all. A collective drive will be important when demonstrating a unified approach to external partners.

3.1.4 Significance of the building's history

While there is universal acknowledgement of the significance of the building's history and heritage, it was felt that the emphasis should be placed on the historical uses and activities carried out there rather than the architecture and building *per se*. This is supported by the listing of the building (which emphasises its historical importance) and comments received from Historic England.

3.1.5 Community benefit

A common theme that emerged was that the revived Mechanics' Institute should contribute to the wellbeing and benefit of the 'community', whatever its future principal use and function turned out to be.

3.1.6 Cultural quarter challenges and risk

While there is a strong desire among some stakeholders to see arts and culture featuring strongly in a restored Mechanics' Institute, it is widely acknowledged that the planned redevelopment of the Wyvern theatre, as part of an expanded cultural quarter, presents a significant challenge to the development and ongoing viability of such a facility at the Institute, and heightens the risks associated with it.

3.1.7 Parking

Parking – specifically, the perceived lack of it in the vicinity of the Mechanics' Institute – has been regularly cited by stakeholders as being a problem. This is linked to certain types of uses, and the concern, when probing more deeply, appears to be the limited ability to dedicate parking space in volume for the building and its users, and at reasonable charges. (Bristol St and Brunel North car parks both lie within a few minutes' walk.)

3.1.8 Mixed approach

Many consultees believed that a mixed-use approach is likely to offer the most viable solution.

3.1.9 No subsidy guarantees

At this stage no stakeholder is in a position to give any guarantees on providing ongoing revenue subsidies or contributions in-kind for a restored Mechanics' Institute. That said, the significant 'will' to see the restoration brought forward demonstrates a potential for both capital and revenue contributions.

3.1.10 Capital funding challenge

Most stakeholders recognise the huge financial challenge that faces the restoration project and the likelihood that any operational financial surplus will be insufficient to return on the investment employed. Linked to this, there is a broad consensus that a solution will require a cocktail of capital funding sources and potentially require the project to be phased to extend the capital expenditure profile (although this presents challenges, as noted elsewhere).

3.1.11 Greater than the sum of the area's parts

Many stakeholders commented on the need for the Mechanics' Institute to work with, not against, its local environs and the other buildings and businesses operating in the vicinity. To this end, the restoration and the building's future activities should focus on delivering *additionality* to the area and avoid *displacement*.

Stakeholders also noted the opportunity for collaboration and interplay between the Mechanics' Institute and neighbouring properties and occupiers.

3.1.12 Perception of a 'very large' building

Many stakeholders commented on how large the building is. This perception seems to relate in part to its iconic significance within the local area and scale when compared with its local environs, rather than the sum of its internal areas.

3.1.13 Swindon's Churchward footfall

The success of the nearby Swindon Designer Outlet, and its contribution to footfall in the Churchward area of town, alongside its near-neighbours Historic England and the National Trust, was referenced by some stakeholders as a significant opportunity for the Mechanics' Institute to capitalise upon. This argument was questioned by other stakeholders, who noted clear distinctions between the type of visitor and their purpose for visiting the Swindon Designer Outlet as opposed to the town centre.

3.2 Public survey findings

Many of the themes arising through the consultations recurred in the responses to the online public survey. The survey was launched at the Mechanics' Institution Trust's public meeting on 14th October 2019 and was further publicised at a meeting with National Trust staff on 25th November 2019. The large majority of the 145 responses to the survey were received within a few days of either event.

Full results are summarised in Appendix 11.

3.2.1 Demographics of respondents

Before exploring the opinions of respondents, we briefly describe their characteristics.

- Just over 40% lived within 20 minutes' walk of the Institute; with 38% living more than 20 minutes' walk away, and the remainder living outside Swindon.
- By age, 38% were under 45; 45% were 45-64, and 17% were 65 or over;
- 54% were male; and
- 93% were white British.

Comparing the demographic of survey respondents to a 30-min drivetime catchment (given that some respondents live outside Swindon) suggests that:

- On age, the drivetime area's adult population is roughly 40% under 45, 37% aged 45-64, and 23% 65 and over. So, our sample is slightly skewed towards middle-aged people at the expense of older ones.
- On ethnicity, the drivetime area population is classed as 92% white (not broken down into British and other). The survey respondents said they were 93% white British and 5% white other.

3.2.2 Interest in the Mechanics' Institute

Respondents were most interested in the history of the building and its architecture rather than, for example, the 'people behind the stories'.

Views on Principal Uses

Of the three principal uses being proposed for the Institute, respondents felt that Swindon most lacked theatre/performance/arts space. This was also felt to be the most viable future use of the building. Higher education uses ranked second on both questions, with business/ conferencing ranking third. Respondents were also given the chance to offer thoughts on other community uses for the Institute: replies here often mentioned reviving previous uses of the building in modern form, such as a theatre/concert hall or a library, but also suggested meeting places/rooms for community and voluntary groups, an art gallery (e.g. for Swindon's municipal art collection), a café, or museum/history displays.

Priorities

The top priority for respondents when asked what was most important to them (out of a range of options) was to get the Institute off the Heritage At Risk register. After this, having public access to at least some parts of the building was seen as most important, followed by community involvement in its governance.

Contribution

The greatest contribution the Institute could make in future was thought to lie in showcasing and raising awareness of the history and heritage of Swindon in general and its links with the railways in particular (though without duplicating the formal museum role of STEAM.) These were followed by the idea of it becoming a community hub.

Community involvement

While there was a strong emphasis on the need for the building to serve the community, that term was widely regarded as meaning all Swindonians rather than any particular group (or indeed residents living in the immediate vicinity).

'Something must be done'

One recurring theme in 'other' comments was the desire just to get something done with the building – there was a strong feeling that it has been allowed to deteriorate for too long.

4 Review of Use Options

In this section the principal use options that were defined in the study brief are considered (Sections 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3), together with other relevant commercial and community uses (Section 4.4).

It should be noted that the three principal use options were identified in earlier studies (of which there have been several) and are drawn from a longer list of options that included the likes of a sixth form college, a community centre, or further education. This report has not attempted to re-visit the longlist but has explored the chosen three options in some detail.

4.1 Principal Use: Theatre / Performance / Arts

4.1.1 Market context

From the early days of its formation, the New Swindon Mechanics' Institution was organising concerts and dances in borrowed space within the GWR railway works.

The construction of the Mechanics' Institute building in 1854 provided the organisation with its own means of staging arts and cultural events. Throughout the building's evolution, the theatre has played a dynamic role in Swindon's performing arts sector, providing a flexible, multi-purpose space, reacting to changing consumer demands and regularly re-positioning itself.

The addition of the fly tower in the 1930s, following a major fire, meant it could stage and host larger events and productions. This helped to underpin the theatre's prominence in Swindon for the next three decades, until the Wyvern theatre opened in 1971.

Today, the Wyvern theatre, with a capacity of 635, is the largest seated venue in Swindon and hosts a mixed programme including commercial touring as well as local productions.

Swindon Arts Centre, located in Old Town, has a 200-capacity auditorium that also hosts a mixed programme. However, that programme is smaller scale and has a greater proportion of amateur and community-orientated productions.

The Wyvern Theatre and Swindon Arts Centre are both operated on behalf of Swindon Borough Council (SBC) by HQ Theatres and Hospitality via management contracts, benefiting from economies of scale and a degree of public involvement and support.

SBC has embarked on the planning of a new cultural quarter, which would see the Wyvern replaced with a larger venue (likely to have a capacity of between 750 and 1,200), a range of smaller complementary performance and rehearsal spaces, a new museum and art gallery, and spaces for the clustering of other arts and cultural activity. This development would be transformational for the arts and cultural scene in Swindon and have profound implications for other sector-related organisations and venues operating in the area. Although space will be finite, the new cultural quarter will be a significant draw and attraction for arts and cultural organisations, offering a range of proximity, networking and supply-chain benefits.

For any partners heavily invested in the cultural quarter's development (either financially or for other reasons), its operational success will be hugely important. To this end, one should expect that for several

years at least following its development, maximum effort and resource will be made available from these partners to ensure its success. Such a large and dominant component of the arts and cultural sector in Swindon risk drawing resources away from other lower-order priorities.

It should be acknowledged, however, that the development of a new cultural quarter has not yet been confirmed and would take many years to plan and with its delivery likely to be phased. As such, the implications for other arts and cultural assets across Swindon are uncertain at this time.

This uncertainty means that the commercial potential for a dedicated theatre operating within the Mechanics' Institute is considered weak. The case for capital funding would be substantially harder to make, given the town's ambition to develop a new cultural quarter. Nor is there likely to be any interest from commercial theatre operators given its physical constraints, particularly while the cultural quarter is being appraised. And, to be financially sustainable in operation (in the absence of revenue subsidy, for which there is currently no evidence of any additional sources) it would need to be staging and attracting a reasonable proportion of commercial events; to succeed in this vein would put it in direct competition with the Wyvern theatre or its replacement, particularly its smaller- to mid-sized spaces.

4.1.2 Physical context: theatre capacity and configuration

Based on historic images and descriptions of the Mechanics' Institute theatre, it seems likely that its maximum audience capacity would have been around 500 (note, earlier options appraisal studies suggested 300). Earlier configurations seem to be based on moveable chairs, while later configurations included fixed seating (presumably following its 1930s refurbishment).

If refurbished, the maximum seated audience capacity of the theatre space is estimated to range from around 450 to 640, based on an allocation of 0.5m² per person, and with the higher figure including the provision of additional mezzanine balconies. However, the permitted operational capacity is likely to be considerably lower, given its first-floor location and consideration of building regulations and means of escape. Furthermore, to facilitate modern theatre-going habits, a significant reconfiguration of ground floor areas beneath the theatre will be required to provide suitable space for foyer, box office, circulation, toilets, cloaks, café/bars, merchandise, first-aid, admin and storage.

The stage itself is a good size and can be accessed from three sides from what could be a combination of backstage areas (including a scenery dock), dressing rooms, production offices and warm-up rooms. However, their first and second floor location means that access to these areas is far from ideal. The compromised 'get-in' (either through an external hoist or new goods lift) will inevitably reduce operational efficiency. A solution for some venues can be to lower the auditorium from first to ground floor. In this situation, however, where one is dealing with a listed building and a tightly constrained building and site, the advantages are considered insufficient to warrant such a dramatic intervention.

Taking on board the above spatial considerations, it is reasonable to assume that the majority of the northern half of the building, and the second floor of the remainder, would be needed to enable a refurbished theatre offer. The likely audience capacity would fall to somewhere between 350 and 500.

4.1.3 Historical relevance

As noted above, the Mechanics' Institute hosted theatre, performance and arts related functions throughout its active life. To this end, a development strategy which focuses on such uses would be viewed sympathetically by a broad range of stakeholders and be in keeping with part of its original intent and purpose.

4.1.4 Conclusions

There will always be examples of arts and cultural venues succeeding in situations where the market evidence suggests they might not, but these are the *exception* not the *rule*. At this time, with the available market evidence and physical considerations of the building, to forge ahead with '*theatre, performance and arts*' as the principal use and central pillar of a restoration programme for the Mechanics' Institute would be high-risk and would be unable to generate sufficient financial contribution itself to cover the operational overheads and long-term building maintenance obligations.

This is not to say that '*theatre, performance and arts*' uses could not be provided for in the Mechanics' Institute restoration programme but rather, a strategy which focuses on these uses as its priority will inevitably present substantial challenges, for which solutions are not currently identifiable.

4.2 Principal Use: Higher Education including R&D

4.2.1 Market context

It is widely acknowledged that Swindon is lacking in higher education offers. The only higher education physically located in the borough is Oxford Brookes University's Swindon Campus, offering an Adult Nursing BSc (Hons).

Despite continual attempts to develop and attract higher education offers into the area, it remains a significant deficiency that directly affects local education and learning pathways, business employment and support, inward investment and place-branding.

Launching in 2020, the Royal Agricultural University's new Swindon facility – to be located in Unit 11 of the former Carriage Works (opposite the Mechanics' Institute building) and to be known as RAU Swindon – will focus initially on post-graduate cultural studies (through its Cultural Heritage Institute) but also feature courses in business and entrepreneurship, real estate and land management. This represents a significant coup for Swindon and has the potential to further stimulate and expand the borough's higher education offer.

The RAU has a vision to expand from an initial post-graduate intake of 40-60 students to around 400-500 students within five years and be complemented by other education partners. However, no commitments have been made in this regard, although early consideration and discussions have begun.

In the context of this study, the RAU positively noted the close proximity of the Mechanics' Institute to the RAU Swindon facility and recognise the significant synergy and collaboration potential, even in the short- to medium-term. More specifically, it was noted that the RAU Swindon facility will not have a large

or tiered lecture space and in time, if their expansion plans were to materialise, they would need further teaching and administration space. But it is important to stress, such future demand is speculative at this stage.

No other expressions of interest from higher education providers have been indicated at this stage. However, it should also be noted that no formal marketing exercise has been undertaken to promote a higher education opportunity generally or specifically relating to the Mechanics' Institute. That said, it is unlikely that further interest would be forthcoming in the short to medium term.

In terms of R&D, this has been a recognised strength of Swindon's economy ever since the GWR railway works were developed. This strength typically resides within the companies operating in the area, sometimes with links to academic and research institutions. Our research to date has not identified any demand or rationale for R&D facilities to be linked to the Mechanics' Institute.

4.2.2 Physical context

Physically, the Mechanics' Institute building offers a range of opportunity for higher education purposes.

The larger spaces (i.e. theatre, lecture and reading rooms) would lend themselves to larger format lectures, teaching, and ceremonial events such as graduations – although if developed as a standalone facility (without parent or satellite sites), the larger spaces might be too large for regular use without sub-division.

The smaller rooms on the ground, first and second floors would offer multiple options such as smaller format teaching and group working spaces, administration, support functions and student welfare.

To put the scale of the building in context, at approximately 2,500m² it translates to around six times the area being occupied by RAU Swindon within the converted Unit 11 of the Carriage Works. As such, it would be a significant education offer if developed for dedicated education use.

If one wanted to avoid significant sub-division of the larger spaces, one would probably need to seek an occupier for which the Mechanics' Institute was one of a portfolio of assets in the area, meaning there might be more regular demand for larger format gatherings. Alternatively, the higher education function might be blended with other uses that demand larger format spaces.

The striking architecture of the building and its heritage could also appeal to higher education occupiers, helping to raise their profile and status (as the University of Greenwich has achieved through its occupation of the Old Royal Naval College).

4.2.3 Historical relevance

Learning was always a central function within the Mechanics' Institute, with its original reading and lecture rooms providing access to books and papers and encouraging the exchange of knowledge and skills. By the 1880s the Institute was providing technical and artistic further education to some 500 students. With such demand and increasingly limited capacity, it subsequently ceded responsibility for technical education to Wiltshire County Council and its new Technical College on Victoria Road.

A development strategy that has higher education at its core would have strong resonance with the history and function of the Mechanics' Institute, even more so if education were to bridge both formal and informal learning objectives.

4.2.4 Conclusions

The combination of market and physical considerations above suggest that a wholesale re-purposing of the Mechanics' Institute for dedicated higher education use would be highly speculative at this stage. It would be more appropriate to acknowledge the significant imminent launch of RAU Swindon at the Carriage Works and seek to build and piggy-back off this, either by attracting regular temporary demand for facilities within the refurbished Mechanics' Institute (from either RAU Swindon or other education partners) or by providing additional permanent accommodation in parts of the building (for say, teaching or administration) for the RAU or others to colonise. To this end, such use would have similar demands and requirements to that of business or conference-related occupiers.

4.3 Principal Use: Business / Conference

4.3.1 Market context

The Centre for Cities Outlook report⁷, published January 2019, confirmed Swindon's continuing economic strengths. Among the sixty-three largest UK cities and towns, Swindon has the eighth highest employment rate, Gross Value Added per worker of £62,700 against the national average of £57,600, the third highest proportion of private sector jobs, and one of the highest shares of highly skilled jobs.

The borough has an enviable list of multi-national firms with offices and plants located in the area covering multiple sectors including manufacturing, engineering, electronics, finance, pharma and energy. There is however a marked geographic separation and distinction between town centre businesses and those located on its periphery, where business parks and land availability is more prevalent, and where ease of access is perceived to be better. This imbalance is further illustrated by the reported lack of Grade A office space within the town centre – an issue that the council and its partners are working to overcome through its large-scale regeneration projects.

Of particular relevance to the Mechanics' Institute, and located on the northern side of the railway line (mostly within the Heritage Action Zone), are the headquarters of the National Trust (Heelis), the Historic England Archive and UK Research and Innovation.

Directly opposite the Mechanics' institute, the former GWR Carriage Works has begun to be converted, starting with the recent opening of Workshed (flexible workspace designed for individuals and small businesses). The second phase of conversion is well underway, including an expansion of Workshed, RAU

⁷ <https://www.centreforcities.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/19-01-28-Cities-Outlook-2019-Full.pdf>

Swindon's micro-campus and further workspace being marketed. Collectively, these conversions amount to around 15% of the entire Carriage Works – slightly larger than the footprint of the Mechanics' Institute. While Workshed is providing high quality workspace for small and micro businesses, Swindon still lacks a genuine business incubator providing affordable space and a holistic range of business support services for start-up and fledgling businesses (though Workshed is still in its infancy, and may adapt its offer in this direction depending on demand).

In terms of conference space, research suggests that there is a plethora of smaller meeting and events spaces within the borough (notably in hotels across the town) and a few larger venues including the Wyvern theatre, STEAM museum, and the De Vere, Marriott and Blunden House hotels.

A refurbished Mechanics' Institute that offered a flexible auditorium and ancillary spaces for larger capacity events of between say, 150 and 450 capacity would appear to address a gap in the Swindon market (and the town more specifically). It would present an opportunity for the programming of new business events and conferences, and not just be reacting to extant demand. Furthermore, its location – being near to both the mainline railway station and the town centre – and its being a building of distinctive character, offering significant history and heritage, would seem to position it favourably for the business and conference market.

4.3.2 Physical context

The Mechanics' Institute building is not ideally suited for traditional office space given the variety and layout of spaces within it (i.e. varying shapes and size, heights and level changes) – although these issues could potentially be overcome through a refurbishment.

As a building, it is considered more appealing as a signature building for a company headquarters than as a traditional office space.

Given the trend and growth in co-working and increasingly flexible workspace solutions, the building's character and history might also be appealing for these types of occupiers – with the larger spaces providing group or co-working areas and the smaller spaces either individual office units or meeting rooms.

For some occupiers, dedicated parking adjacent to the building will be a mandatory requirement; this is less important for co-working and more flexible office solutions.

The larger spaces within the building, originally designed for group gatherings, would probably be more sympathetically aligned to hosting business events and conferences rather than for dedicated workspace purposes. If this were pursued, then the ground floor spaces beneath the theatre (assumed to be converted to a flexible auditorium) would need to provide support space, typically in the form of reception, foyer, networking, break-out, administration and catering.

Some of the stage area and its fly tower might in this case be redundant and could potentially be converted to additional event or break-out areas or ancillary functions.

4.3.3 Historical relevance

Of the three principal uses, business and /or conference space is probably the least sympathetic to the original intents and purposes of the Mechanics' Institute. To this end, the commercial (financial) case would need to be more advantageous than for the other principal uses to overcome the lack of historical connection.

4.3.4 Conclusions

From the baseline work, it appears that there is a gap in the marketplace for a quality, mid-sized venue for hosting business events and conferences. Furthermore, the physical nature of the existing spaces would lend themselves sympathetically to this type of use, and the iconic history and heritage could provide an appealing backdrop for a character venue and premium offer.

A significant trade-off in this situation would be the lack of synergy with the historic activities of the Mechanics' Institute, although these could be overcome through a mixed-use approach with the business and conference dimension providing a commercial underpinning.

Recognising the business incubator void in Swindon, the Mechanics' Institute may present an opportunity to host such a facility, which could naturally sit alongside a venue proposition. Given the historic nature of the Mechanics' Institute and its setting within the wider Heritage Action Zone, an incubator focused on 'heritage-tech' might provide a compelling differentiator in the longer term for Swindon, and offer partnering opportunities with RAU Swindon, Historic England, National Trust and UK Research and Innovation.

4.4 Other Commercial and Community Uses

The brief for the viability assessment includes the option of supplementing the principal uses (discussed above) with a combination of commercial and community functions. The intention of the former would be to help underpin the long-term financial viability of Mechanics' Institute, while the latter could deliver direct community benefit and uses that are sympathetic to the building's original intent and activities.

4.4.1 Local change and development flux

Importantly, whether one is considering commercial or community facilities, they should be satisfying an expressed or latent demand for which existing or planned facilities in the area are either unable or insufficiently provisioned to satisfy. In this regard, it is important to note the dynamic nature of the local context and facilities operating in the area. For example:

- The Mechanics' Institution Trust's recent leasing of the former Cricketers pub, with plans to convert it to B&B accommodation, retail and workspace;
- The recent opening and continuing evolution of the Baker's Café;
- The Shoebox Theatre's recent move into the Health Hydro;
- SBC's planned investment of £1.5m in the Health Hydro;

- Workshed's recent opening in the Carriage Works and the development of further units, with RAU Swindon due to launch in the spring and a ground floor use (Unit 11), fronting London Street, likely to be A1 (shops) or A3 (café / restaurant);
- The Diocese of Bristol's redevelopment of the Pattern Store into a 'resourcing church' and lettable office space; and
- Changes in the management and operation of GWR Park.

Given this continuing flux within the local area, it is important that any supplementary commercial and community facilities proposed for the Mechanics' Institute be considered as part of a 'masterplan' for the local area. Such uses should also remain as flexible as possible within the Mechanics' Institute plan, given the length of time it will undoubtedly take to renovate the building and the potential for further significant change to occur in the local market during this time.

4.4.2 Short-list of commercial and community uses

Notwithstanding the above, the following supplementary uses – many of which have been referenced in previous appraisals and development plans for the Mechanics' Institute – have been identified through the baseline assessment as having either a commercial or community potential. It would be important, however, to try to ensure that any such offer was complementary to, rather than competitive with, other facilities in the Carriage Works of the Heritage Action Zone.

- **Retail** – shops that either support the core use of the building or provide opportunities for temporary or pop-up retail provision, or are 'make-sell' space for independent producers or craftspeople that are less reliant on continuous footfall;
- **Restaurant, bars and cafes** – that are sufficiently differentiated from other restaurants, bars and cafes in the locality or are designed to support the core activities within the building;
- **Other leisure and recreation provision** – either as permanent or temporary fixtures within the building that may provide a financial return or be designed largely for community benefit (and which will likely be highly sympathetic to historic activities that took place in the building);
- **Venue for private hires** – such as weddings, receptions, and other private functions;
- **Venue for programmable events** – such as exhibitions, screenings, talks, performances and shows;
- **Administration or activity space for community or charitable/non-profit organisations** – that may or may not have the financial capacity to pay rent but could also provide significant community benefit; and
- **Residential or non-serviced apartments** – as either long- or short-term residential lets for living purposes or daily rent for leisure and/or business purposes e.g. serviced apartments, Airbnb.

5 Preferred Option and Emerging Vision

The combination of the baseline assessment and appraisal of use options has helped to identify a preferred option for the Mechanics' Institute – a multi-purpose events venue – that responds to the partners' strategic aims and objectives while offering a solution that has a high probability of being funded and strong potential to become financially viable in operation.

The project steering group unanimously supported this preferred option at the interim stage of the study.

In this section, an emerging vision for the Mechanics' Institute has been described, including how it relates to the wider Heritage Action Zone.

A philosophy for conserving the building and its historical features has also been described, and an indication of how the individual spaces could be repurposed to achieve the vision. Importantly, the proposals described represent a *design brief*, not a *design*.

5.1 A Vision for the Mechanics' Institute

The Mechanics' Institute will once again return to being a focal point and 'pulse' for Swindon's historic quarter and its communities: *"a place to connect and celebrate Swindon's communities past, present and future"*.

Figure 2: Vision for the Mechanics' Institute



The building's impressive architecture and celebrated spaces – notably, its *Theatre, Reading and Lecture Rooms* – will be transformed into an outstanding multi-purpose venue that positively contributes to the 'offer' of contemporary Swindon, while respecting and drawing on its own past and that of the Railway Village around it, and the wider former Railway Works area.

The restoration will mark the next major milestone in the building's 165 year history, that has frequently seen it evolve to address the changing needs of its community and local environs.

The Mechanics' Institute will again be working in the interests, and serving the needs, of both Swindon residents and businesses. Its significance and the impact it has on Swindon's communities – and society at large – will once more resonate as much from the activities and events taking place within it as from the building itself.

In its restored and repurposed state, the Mechanics' Institute will be both a beacon and showcase for Swindon, reinforcing the significance of its past and building on it, to meet the needs of its present and future communities.

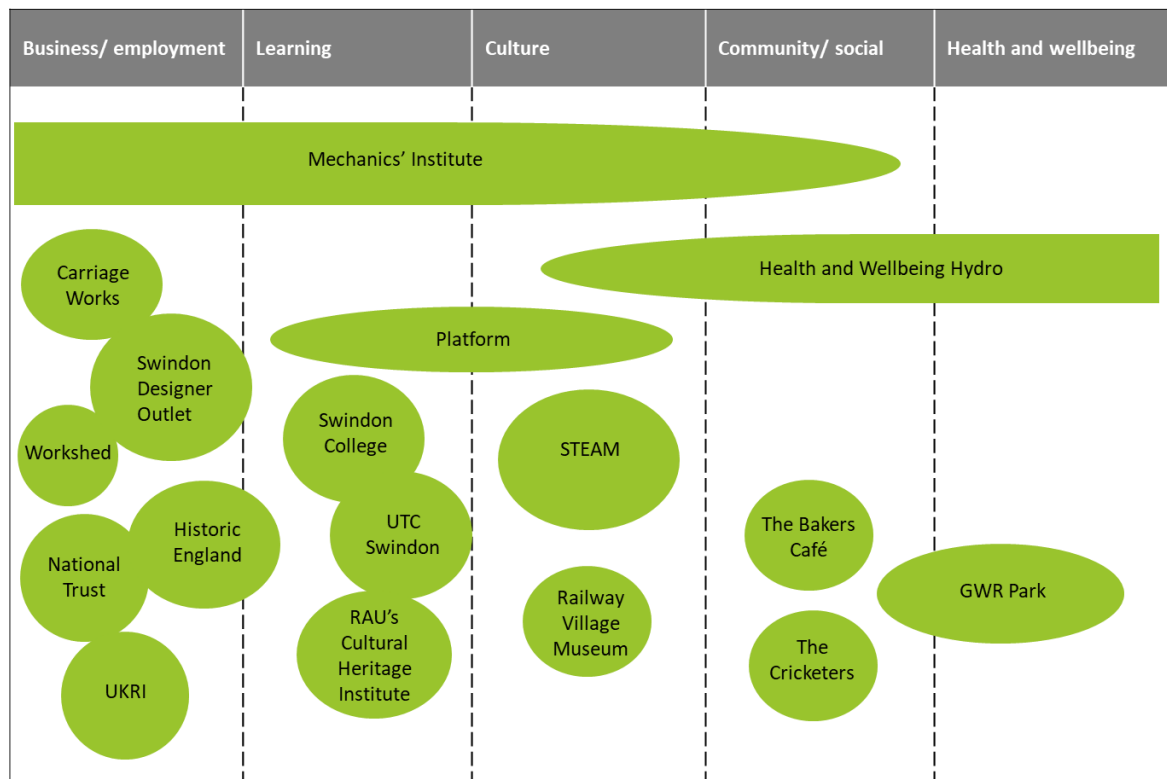
5.1.1 The Mechanics' Institute's Place in Swindon's Heritage Quarter

The Mechanics' Institute has been described as the 'last piece of the jigsaw' in the Railway Village: the last major property within the Heritage Action Zone without a confirmed long-term use. While this presents a challenge, it is also an opportunity: the Institute can be re-purposed in the knowledge of what else is happening around it, and in a way that enhances the area's appeal rather than duplicating existing facilities.

The original Railway Works and Railway Village – what is now Swindon's Heritage Action Zone – were in their heyday part of a pioneering and nationally significant movement addressing a combination of social, employment, education, cultural and health issues. Modern reflections of these have been maintained or revived in and around the Heritage Action Zone. The Railway Works site provides employment at the Carriage Works and in the Designer Outlet Centre, as well as at Heelis, North Star and Historic England's premises. STEAM, the Railway Village Museum and The Platform provide arts, heritage and learning offers. The Health Hydro continues as a health and leisure centre and Swindon College contributes to education.

The arrival of the Royal Agricultural University's Cultural Heritage Institute within the Carriage Works and the latest proposals for the Health Hydro and the Mechanics' Institute will reinforce these links to the past and do so in some of the key period buildings. As Figure 3 illustrates, the Mechanics' Institute and the Health and Wellbeing Hydro will combine with the rest of the regenerated heritage quarter to deliver a contemporary echo of the key pioneering themes of the area's past.

Figure 3. Facilities and functions across the Heritage Action Zone



5.2 Conservation Philosophy and Approach

5.2.1 Overview

The Mechanics' Institute is a Grade II* building which is on both the Historic England At Risk Register and the Theatres Trust Theatres at Risk Register. It is a central landmark within the Railway Village Conservation Area, with a number of listed buildings on its curtilage. The idea of its sensitive re-use has received support from English Heritage, Swindon Borough Council and other consultee bodies such as the Theatres Trust and the Council's conservation and planning officers. However, the loss of the original use of the building requires a creative and economically sustainable solution to support its re-use, and in turn, its ongoing maintenance; however, this use should not lead to an unacceptable loss of significance. The statement below sets out some of the key considerations with regard to the preservation of the heritage significance of the building in respect of the preferred option for its re-use.

5.2.2 Outline Statement of Significance

Alan Baxter Associates prepared an outline statement of significance within their report prepared for Metropolitan Workshop dated September 2015, a summary of which is set out below, and is accompanied by the following diagrams:

Fabric of High Significance

- a) The Gothic revival north elevation of the building
- b) The auditorium at first floor level
- c) The panelled reading room (elevated by Donald Insall Associates during this study, although this will depend on the results of surveys)
- d) Two first floor rooms within the southern end of the building, given interest by exposed trusses
- e) The original external walls which provide an axis to the ground floor plan within the northern part of the building

Fabric of Medium Significance

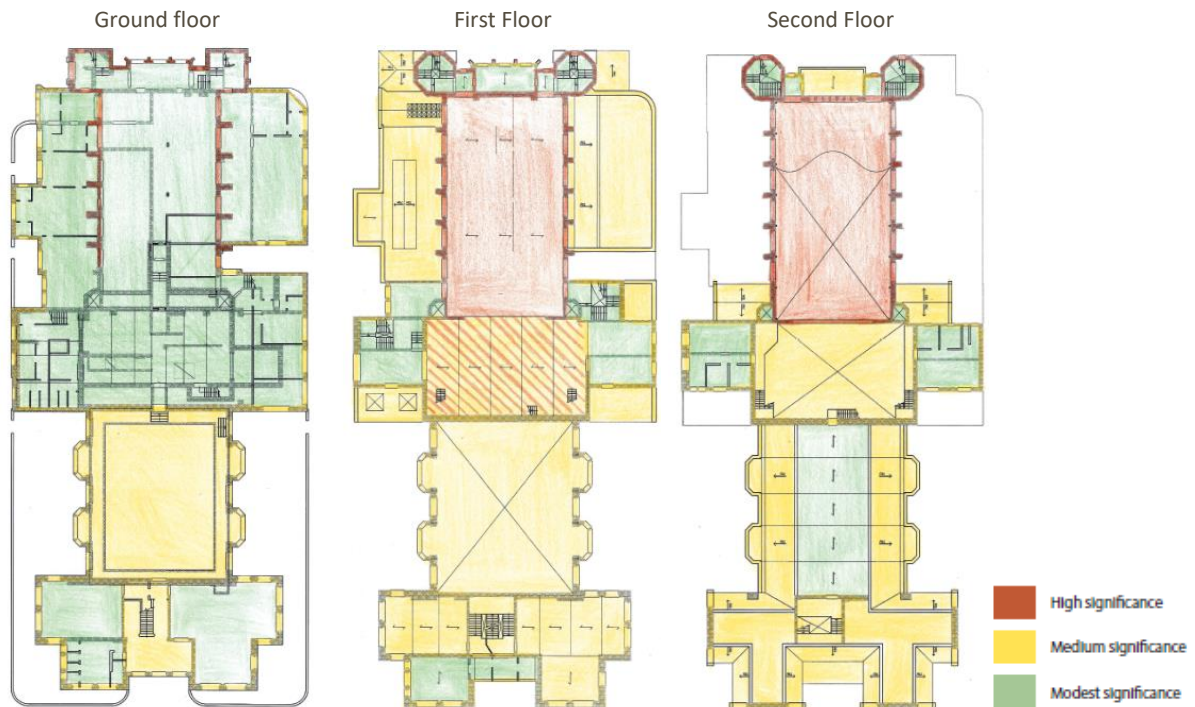
- f) The idiosyncratic ad-hoc extensions that tell a story of the building's evolution
- g) The 1930s fly tower
- h) The stair core to the southern end of the building

Fabric of Modest Significance

- i) The internal rooms at ground, first and second floors, excluding stair cores within the southern end of the building

Perhaps of more interest is the highly significant cultural value of the building (see *History* section within Historic England's List Entry, included at Appendix 2.4.3), which has long been central to Swindon's identity and the generations of railway workers who have known and used it. It also remains as one of the largest surviving examples of a Mechanics' Institute and a rare example of a Gothic Revival building of this nature, with the typical aesthetic of a 'classical chapel'. The cultural significance of the building could be seen as either equal to or higher than the (highly significant) fabric.

Figure 4. Extracts from Alan Baxter's Statement of Significance



5.2.3 Conservation Approach

Access was not possible during the course of this study, and therefore our approach has been based upon secondary sources, including Alan Baxter Associates' Outline Statement of Significance, plan drawings contained within the Statement of Urgent Works report dated October 2009, knowledge of the building from those who have gained access in recent years and TheSecretVault YouTube video which has provided us with a high-level understanding of the current internal condition.

Any approach to re-use should try and preserve as far as practical those aspects which have been designated of high significance. As such, it is proposed that the theatre be retained in its original form, with the north elevation of the building retained as the principal entrance.

Sub-dividing the reading room has also been avoided so that this space can be appreciated in its original form. The current option also benefits from re-using the existing entrance and exits to provide secondary access, fire exits and access for servicing, requiring no or little change to the external appearance of the building.

The reading room and theatre are proposed as flexible event spaces which can be used to host community and private events. This allows for the retention of a community use for the building which should be encouraged where economically viable.

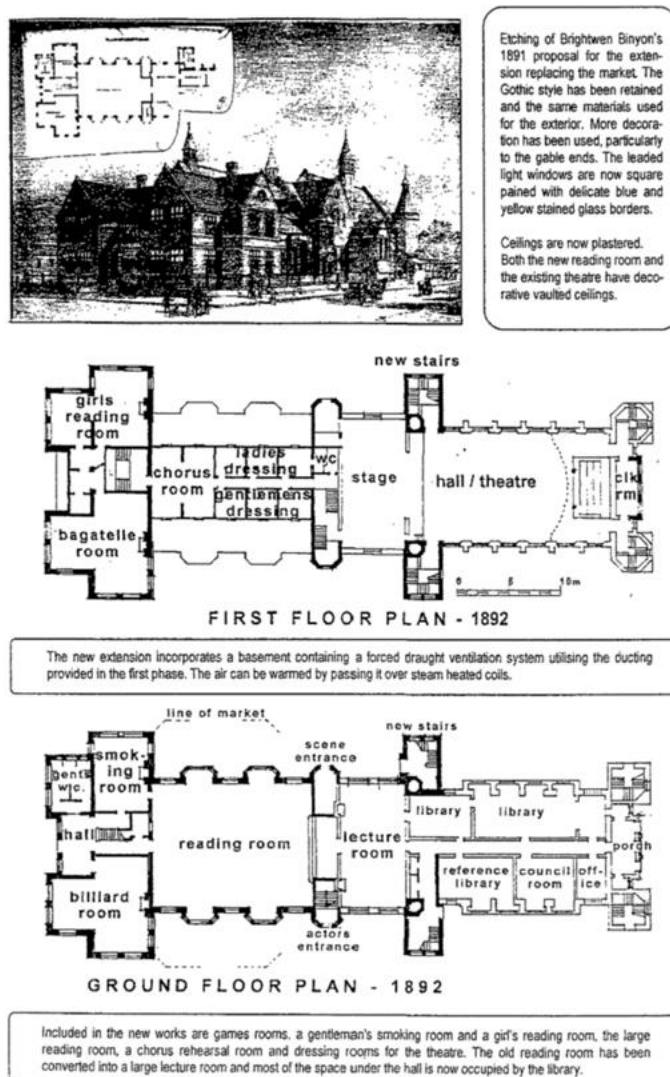
The layout of the ground floor when the building was first opened is thought to have had a central axis which led to the lecture and reading rooms (see Figure 5). This has been lost through a large number of infills and it is not proposed that it is restored. The current option allows for removing some of these

partitions so that the space can be used as an open foyer, with areas such as the bowling alley being subdivided to provide WCs. Current subdivisions can be of use to provide facilities such as flexible meeting rooms and office accommodation.

The lecture room has the potential to be sensitively subdivided through the use of sliding partitions which will allow flexibility and provide access at all times to the reading room.

The fly tower has been reused within the current option as it provides the opportunity to create an additional floor of accommodation. There could be an argument for removing the fly tower; however, the benefits of doing this would need to outweigh its current significance as a core part of the story of the evolution of the building.

Figure 5. Extracts showing central axis to Lecture and Reading Rooms



5.2.4 Internal Spaces

As access was not available due to the condition of the building, it has been assumed that the majority of the finishes have been lost and that it is likely the building would need to be taken back to its original structure to enable repair works. As such there is some flexibility as to the approach of what is put back in terms of architectural style and material. The theatre and reading room should be carefully examined, and either a scheme for restoring the original decorations or a contemporary take on these should be considered e.g. the 'arrested decay' approach applied to Alexandra Palace Theatre in north London. It has been agreed that due to the status of the building, a high level of finishes should be seen throughout; however, these should not necessarily use traditional materials such as lime plaster and timber panelling. Any interventions should be of high-quality design and carefully considered to provide flexibility to possible future uses. It is expected that there may be further demolitions required internally when the condition of the building can be fully assessed.

5.2.5 Environmental Approach

The anticipated need to strip much of the existing internal finishes and provide a new mechanical and electrical system for the building provides a great opportunity to consider improving the environmental performance of the building, through both passive means and technology. This could include the introduction of additional insulation to walls, the roof and floor, and the use of renewable energies, and a full assessment should be provided. This may benefit from the advice of a specialist environment consultant as part of the design team and could potentially provide an opportunity to provide an exemplar scheme for retrofitting existing buildings within the town.

5.2.6 Architectural Conservation and Design Development: Next Stages

We would recommend that the following stages should be undertaken to inform further design work:

- A comprehensive historic building report with Statement of Significance. If possible, this should be informed by an internal survey of the building.
- An understanding of the internal condition of the building will provide us with an understanding of where materials could be salvaged for re-use and where further demolition may be required.
- A series of conservation principles should be established in coordination with Historic England, the Theatres Trust and the Council's Conservation Officer to provide a key set of principles for development.

5.3 Spatial brief

In this section we walk through the building, describing the key physical interventions proposed to bring the building back into use as an effective, high quality, multi-purpose events venue. To aid its operational and financial performance, the adaptability of spaces within the building will be key, enabling it to host a range of event types and formats, as well as multiple events and activity concurrently.

The illustrated plans are intended to provide a *design brief*, not a *design* at this stage. Furthermore, these have been informed only by historic surveys and plans of the building, and recent video footage uploaded onto YouTube⁸.

5.3.1 Ground floor separation

The diagram in Figure 6 illustrates a proposed line of internal separation across the building from east to west. This need not be a fixed or hard separation, with access between the two sides still being maintained to provide means of escape or service access.

The proposed line of separation acknowledges the incompatibility between the large size and capacity of the Reading Room and the relatively thin corridor that leads through to it from the southern entrance.

The separation also provides an opportunity to maximise the value of the smaller spaces at ground and first floor levels on the southern end of the building (see Section 5.3.11).

Providing access into the Reading Room either via the northern entrance (and foyer arrangements described in Section 5.3.5 below) or a new dedicated entrance on either the east or west side is, on balance, considered the most logical approach.

Figure 6. Proposed ground floor line of 'separation'



5.3.2 Accessing the building

The primary entrance will be maintained via the northern side of the building. This corresponds with its historical orientation and capitalises on the architectural prominence and status of this façade.

⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pm7WV6j135U>

This northern entrance is also orientated to face the Carriage Works (an emerging hub for business, education and workspace) and the underpass that leads to the northern side of the Railway Works with the designer (retail) outlet, STEAM and business premises, including those of the National Trust and Historic England's archive. The northern entrance therefore capitalises on the main pedestrian thoroughfare and 'desire line' that connects the mainline train station to the underpass, and presents an opportunity to establish direct visual connections along these routes.

A key issue to resolve for any multi-purpose venue is the provision of suitable service and production access, which would ideally be solely for its use or, at least, unimpeded by public access. This is proposed on the east side of the building (see arrow labelled "S" in Figure 7), where historically, the service access would have been.

The series of smaller arrows along the eastern and western flanks of the building indicate potential secondary and tertiary public and service access points, which would provide greater building flexibility in use and the provision of dedicated access for staging concurrent events. Inevitably, there will need to be a cost benefit analysis to alight on the optimum provision of additional service points – recognising the potential additional security and staffing requirements that may be demanded but also the potential to only have to open up those parts of the building required by the events. There are numerous secondary access options, which would need to be considered during the design development process.

Figure 7. Proposed entrances and access points



5.3.3 Vertical circulation

Vertical circulation within the building focuses around the five historic staircases to minimise the physical intervention.

Three new lifts are proposed to be inserted within these areas on the eastern, western and southern sides of the building. This means that all areas within the building (apart from the balcony within the theatre auditorium) would be accessible.

This vertical circulation proposal is considered to provide more than adequate access and means of escape to/from all first and second floor spaces within the building.

During the detailed design development, consideration will need to be given to the suitable delineation or operational programming between public and servicing vertical access arrangements. At this stage, it is assumed that the lift located on the western side of the building would have a greater 'servicing' function, as it is next to the proposed service entrance and the adjacent kitchens at ground floor level. As such, this lift may need to have greater capacity for goods and production.

Figure 8. Proposed vertical access locations



5.3.4 External areas

A perimeter wall runs part-way around the building, delineating several small external areas, mostly around the southern end of the building, on the east and west sides of the Reading Room. These external areas present opportunities for either private external spaces linked to the adjacent ground floor uses or possibly new entrance and arrival areas for dedicated access to the individual rooms.

Although it is beyond the scope of this study, it is worth noting there is an opportunity to create a wider 'apron' around the building to improve its overall setting and quality of place. This could be pedestrianised or shared space (i.e. pedestrians, cycles and vehicles). While such improvements may be describable, they would not be essential to enable the Mechanics' Institute's restoration.

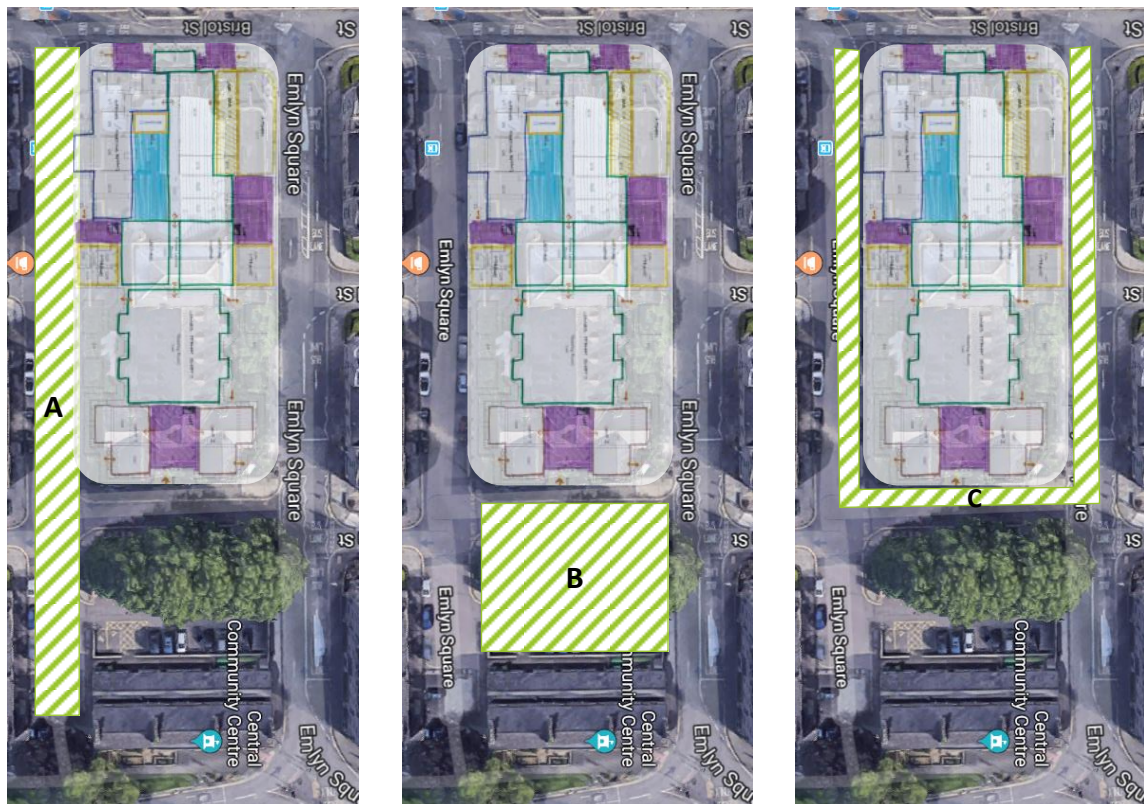
Ideas that have been raised during this study – and are recommended for exploration as part of a wider HAZ master-planning and placemaking exercise – include:

- Closing the western side of Emlyn Square to traffic (the south end of this road at the junction with Faringdon Road is already blocked off). See diagram "A" in Figure 9
- Traffic calming measures or closing the area of Emlyn Square lying between the Mechanics' Institute and the Central Community Centre (Medical Fund Society building) – providing a new

public square and more sympathetic links and external areas between those buildings. See diagram "B" in Figure 9.

- Reducing the roads through Emlyn Square to single lane, one-way traffic thereby releasing space to widen the pavement around the Mechanics' Institute. See diagram "C" in Figure 9.

Figure 9. Extending the building's 'apron' (indicative options A, B and C)



5.3.5 Foyer, Bar and Cafe

On entering the building through the main northern entrance, visitors will arrive into a new large open space – the foyer.

The foyer will provide an arrival threshold and a place for orientation, information and gatherings before, during and after events.

A secondary access is suggested from the east side of the building, which will also provide service access.

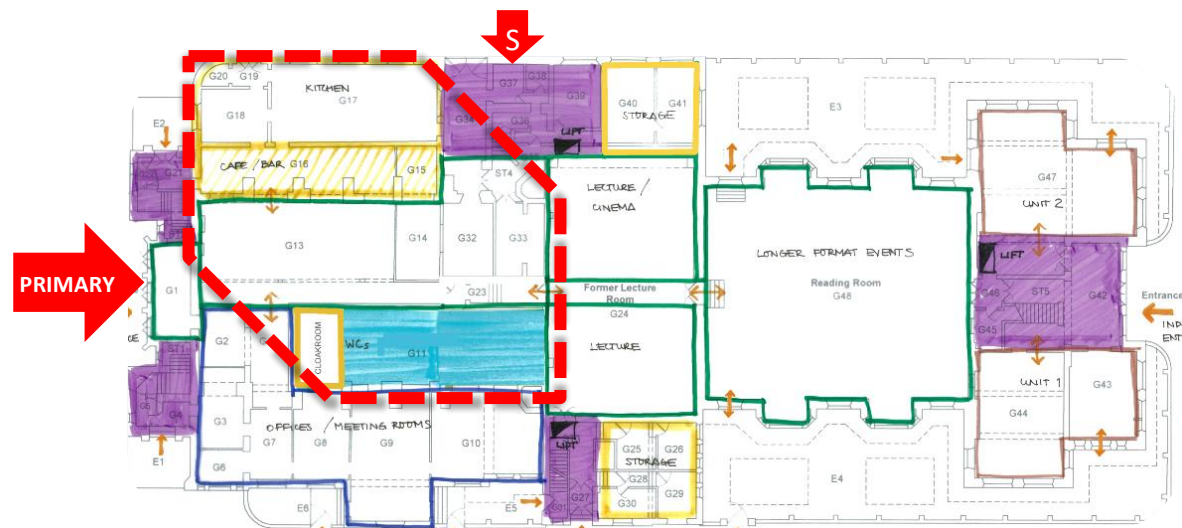
A cloakroom and large block of toilets is included within this area, scaled on the maximum capacities of the individual event spaces. Some cloakroom and toilet provision may be distributed elsewhere as part of the detailed design development process to provide dedicated toilets for events running concurrently across different rooms in the building.

This area would also include a medical room for first aid.

The foyer will be serviced by a café and bar, providing a daytime and evening offer to support and complement the programme of events.

A sizeable commercial kitchen will service the café / bar and the catering requirements of events staged across the building's individual venues. These are assumed to range from drinks and light snacks (for say, smaller gatherings, stand-up receptions, stage performances) to fully catered banquets and wedding receptions within the larger rooms.

Figure 10. Proposed foyer, bar and café and supporting functions



5.3.6 Lecture Room

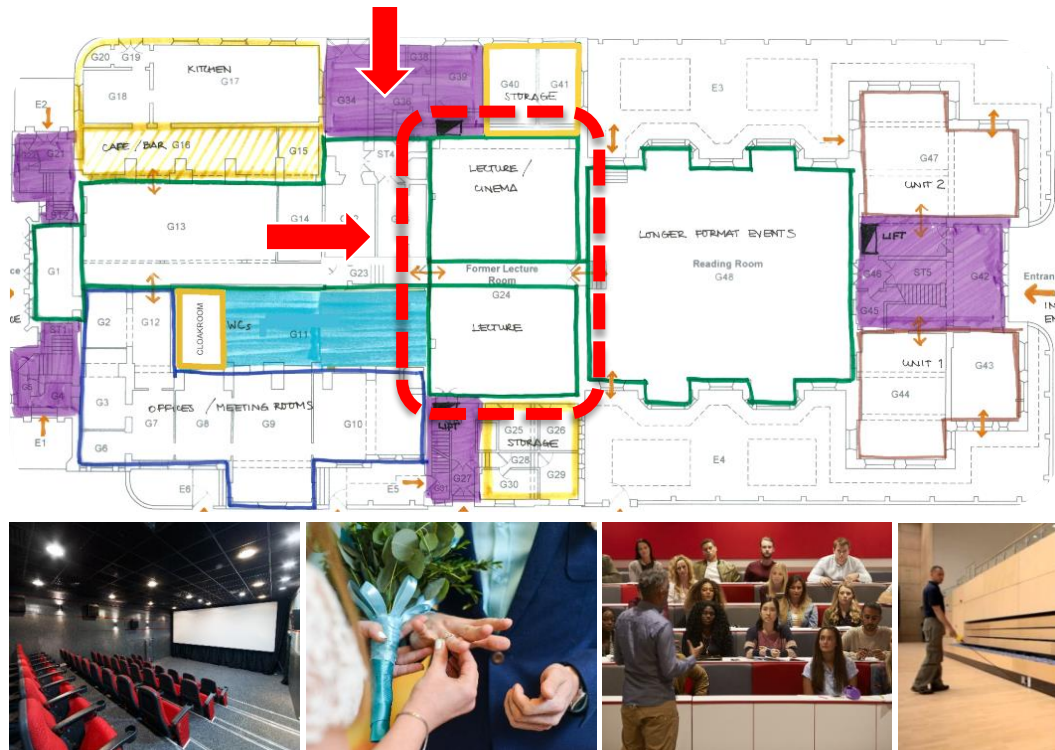
The former Lecture Room will be divided to enable a crucial means of access to be gained through to the Reading Room. Without this, the Reading Room would be physically disconnected from the Foyer and its potential will be significantly curbed.

A sympathetic division of the space will be made with the aim of having flexible partitioning to allow the full original space to be opened up, if required, and for the rooms to work in conjunction with the foyer to provide greater or lesser capacity, as demanded by individual events and activities.

Reflecting their historical uses, the new rooms would have the potential for seated capacities of around 70-80. It is proposed that one of the rooms would have retractable seating installed, providing tiered seating and an intimate space for film screenings, talks and lectures.

The adjacent areas to the west and east of the two rooms could provide storage or ancillary space.

Figure 11. Proposed re-purposing of the former Lecture Room



5.3.7 Small flexible spaces

Accessed off the foyer, an area of c.185m² is proposed for conversion into a series of divisible spaces for meetings, seminars, lessons and as breakout space for larger events being staged in the building.

These rooms would be available for more granular hire than the larger spaces (i.e. by the hour rather than day) and could be accessed directly off Emlyn Square from its west. Located at the north end of the building, these smaller spaces are close to the former Carriage Works and their growing community of business and education tenants, which represent a valuable potential source of regular users.

Figure 12. Proposal for smaller flexible meeting spaces



5.3.8 Reading Room

The Reading Room was one of the most significant and impressive spaces within the Mechanics' Institute. Originally the site of the Market Hall, it was redeveloped in the late 1800s to form the Reading Room.

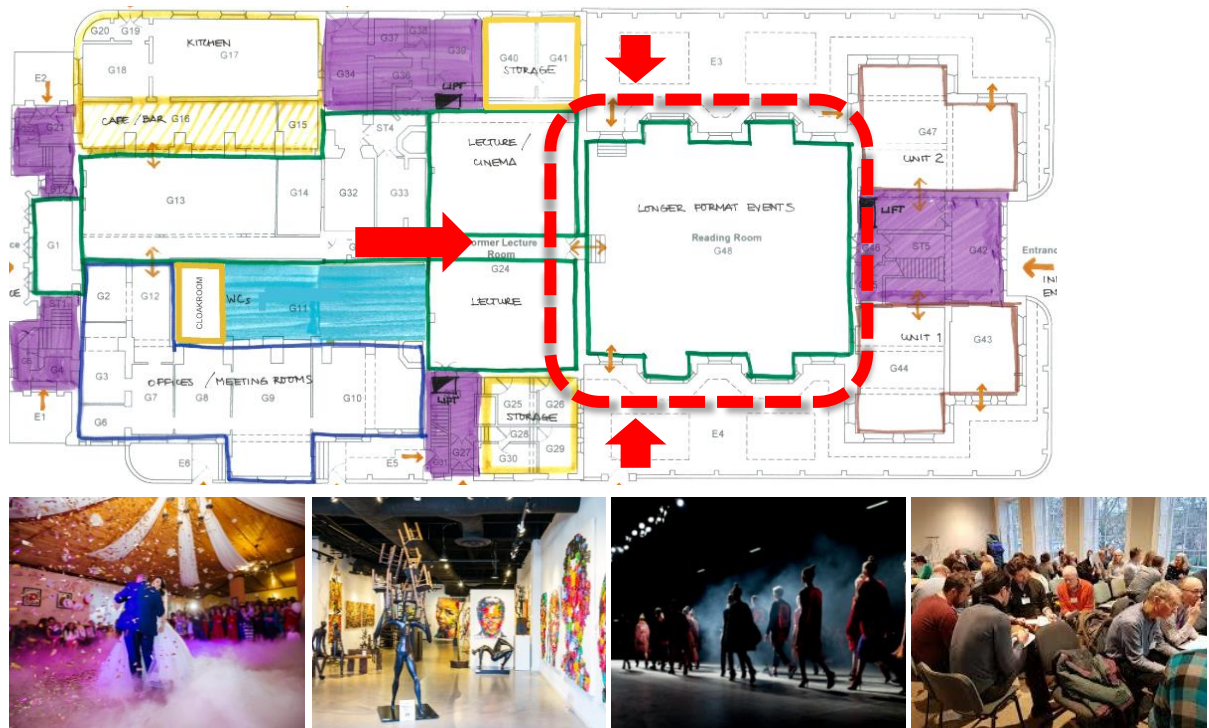
The proposal seeks to bring the space back up to its former grandeur, capitalising on its ground floor location, size and vaulted ceiling.

As a banqueting space, it will be capable of hosting around 170 guests (leaving space for a small stage and dancefloor), and more for receptions and theatre-style seated events.

The space will be ideal for a broad range of uses including wedding receptions, dances, exhibitions and community gatherings.

Opportunities to create new means of access into the Reading Room either from the east or west (preferable) should be explored during the design development process, which could significantly enhance its appeal and flexibility, and by providing a dedicated entrance, toilets and storage/ancillary areas.

Figure 13. Proposed re-purposing of the Reading Room



5.3.9 Theatre, stage and balcony

The former theatre, located at first floor level, is a large and impressive space.

It is proposed to restore the auditorium to create a flexible space, capable of hosting a range of event formats including staged performances, conferences, lectures and award ceremonies, banquets and open floor arrangements. Key to this will be the retention of its flat floor and moveable seating, black-out capability and appropriate audio-visual provision.

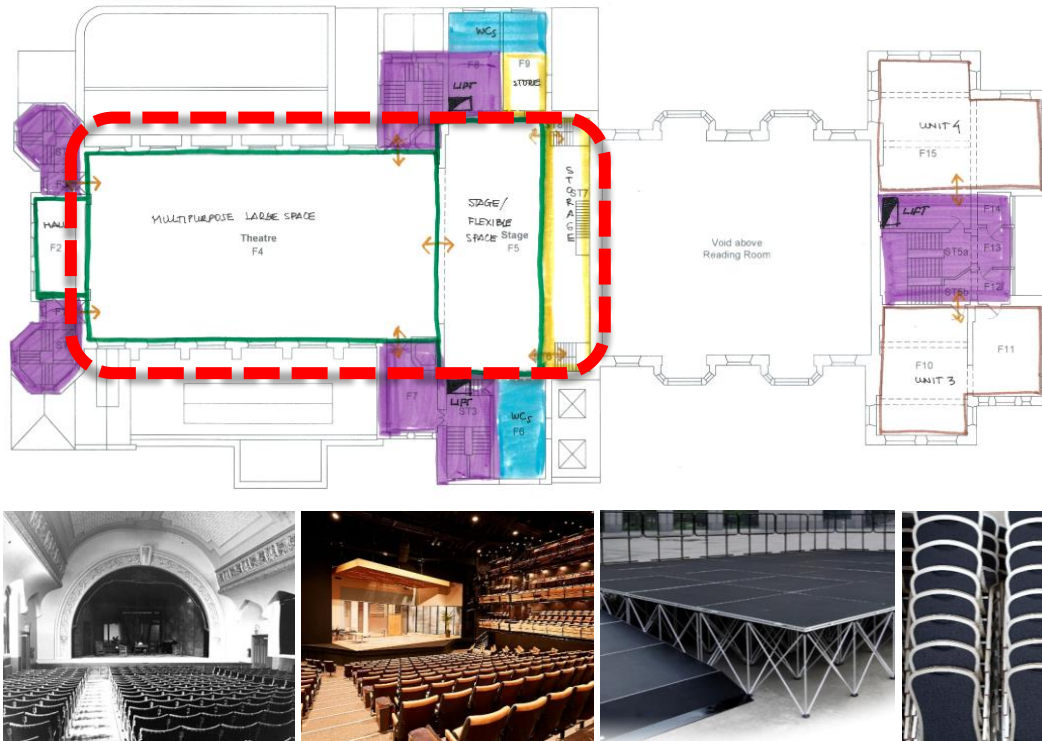
The capacity will vary depending on the event type and format. For theatre-style configuration, the auditorium is likely to seat up to c.450 (including balcony). For banquets, the number would reduce and is estimated to be around 240.

The proscenium arch and architectural detailing (much of which is assumed to have been lost) represented some of the building's most significant features and will be retained and/or reinstated to recreate its former character and charm.

The stage area will be reconfigured to provide greater flexibility and a storage area for tables and chairs. The stage level will be lowered to match the auditorium level and be replaced by a flexible modular system.

For staged performances, backstage areas (green room, dressing rooms, scenery stores etc.) will be accommodated either in the side wings/spaces or within the re-configured fly tower above the stage area.

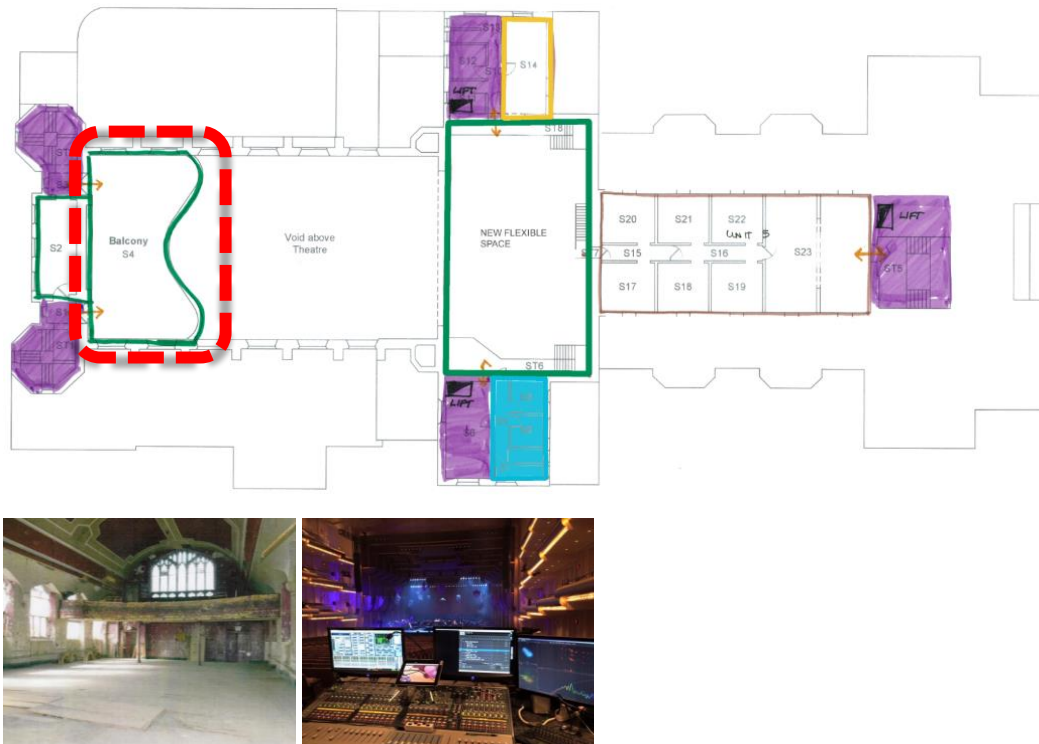
Figure 14. First floor theatre space



The balcony will be retained with fixed seating and is assumed to include the provision of a new AV control deck/booth, which could either be demountable or fixed. Taking this into account, the seated capacity is estimated to be around 70-80.

As noted in Section 5.3.3, the balcony is assumed to only be accessible by stairs and be the only area of the building without lift access. This could potentially be overcome through the insertion of a lift into one of the stair cores on the northern elevation of the building, although this is a decision for more detailed design consideration and a related cost-benefit analysis.

Figure 15. Second floor balcony



5.3.10 Fly Tower

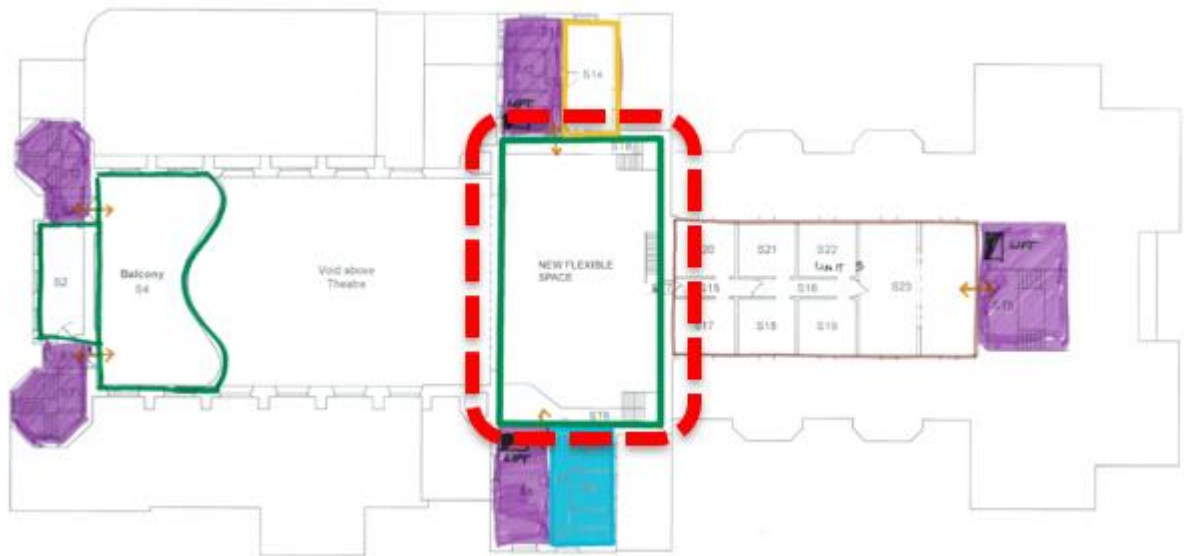
Considering the building's proposed future programming, and the current demands of theatrical performances for a venue of this scale (and into the future), the need for a fly tower is limited, and the case for its retention is therefore weak.

There could be a case for removing the fly tower, on the grounds that its later inclusion and architectural aesthetic take away from the more significant features of the building. Conversely, the history of the building (including the fly tower) and its evolution over time could support its retention.

On balance, the recommendation is that it be retained but repurposed. This proposal assumes that a new floor is inserted into the fly tower just above the proscenium arch, providing a large double height space (c.175m²) that could support several different uses, including:

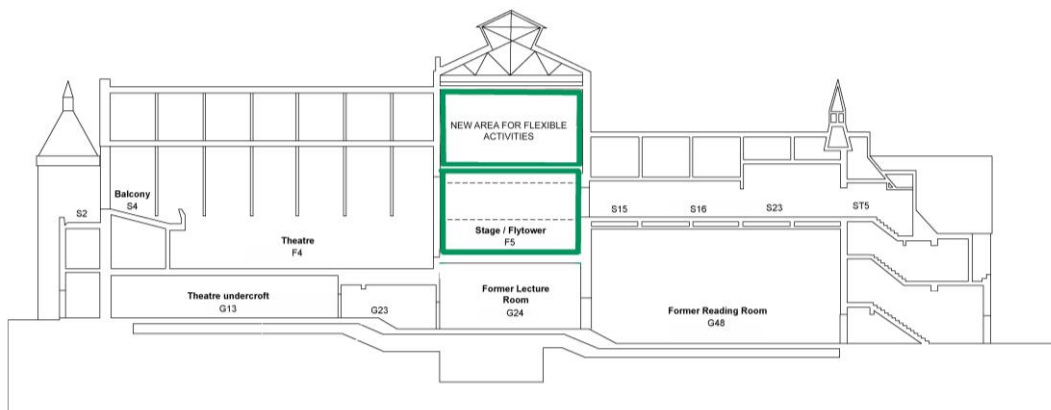
- Ancillary space that supports large events being staged in the theatre space;
- Another venue space – perhaps a dance or rehearsal studio or another flexible venue; and
- Restaurant, taking advantage of its elevated position.

Figure 16. Proposal to create a new space within the fly tower



The section plan below – running north-south through the building – illustrates the insertion of a new floor within the fly tower. The plan also shows the changing levels and varying floor to ceiling heights through the building, in part reflecting its evolution over time and broad range of uses and functionality.

Figure 17. Building section plan



5.3.11 Southern elevation

The southern elevation of the building is proposed to provide dedicated access into the five large units covering the ground, first and second floors.

These units, excluding access and circulation between them, total 522m². The units on the ground and first floor range from 82m² to 102m² while the unit above the Reading Room on the second floor is 153m².

Consideration has been given to a wide range of uses for these spaces including office, residential, apartments, retail and spaces that either support, or work independently, of the building's principal role as a venue.

While residential and office uses could provide either a capital receipt or long-term revenue stream, the estimated sales and rental values (even with a premium) are insufficient to generate a positive development value when all capital and revenue costs are taken into consideration (i.e. a conservation deficit would exist as the residual land value would be negative).

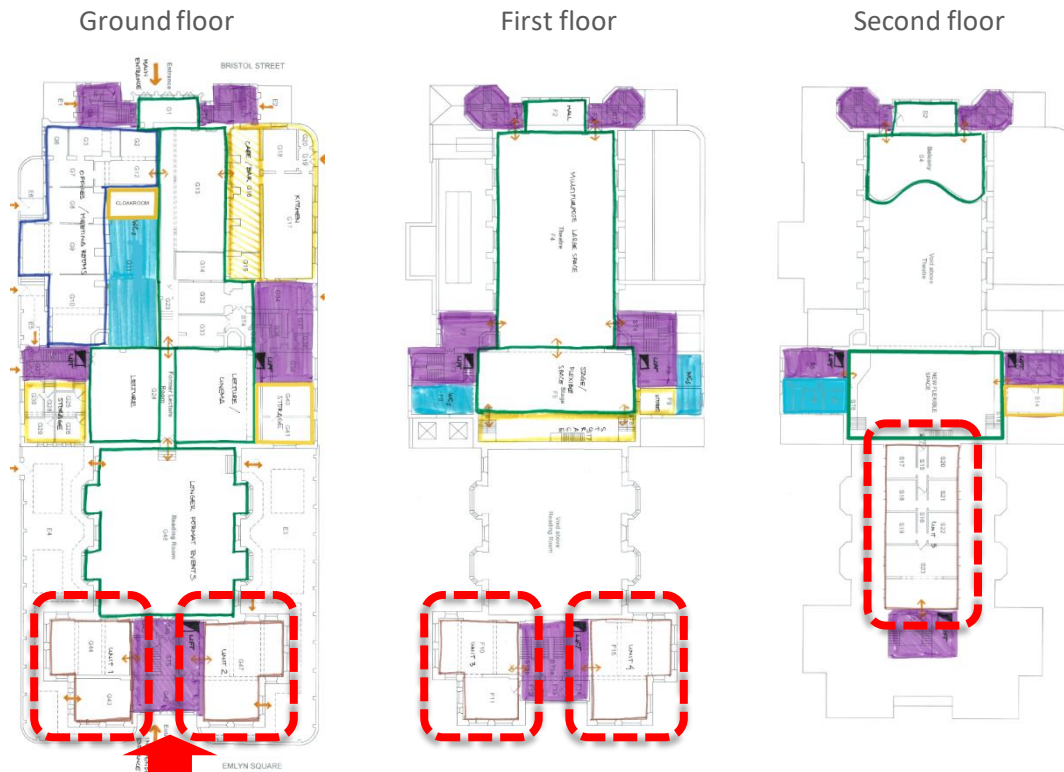
The ground floor spaces, particularly if the area of Emlyn Square between the Mechanics' Institute and the Central Community Centre were calmed or pedestrianised, might lend themselves to retail, gallery, professional services or food and drink related uses (although one needs to be mindful of other similar businesses operating or planned to open in the immediate area that may compete).

The unit situated on the second floor above the Reading Room could be impacted by sound resonating from events being staged below. This would affect residential use particularly. This may be mitigated through some form of acoustic separation, but this would require more detailed design consideration.

With the Cricketers pub being proposed for conversion to a Bed and Breakfast, there is an opportunity to manage and service guest accommodation within these units of the Mechanics' Institute from that operation. Guest accommodation could be naturally packaged with events being staged in the Mechanics' Institute (e.g. bridal suites and wedding guests, business tourists etc.).

At this stage we have assumed that all units will be rented out on a commercial basis, although it should be noted that rental values in the area are relatively depressed and therefore the projections are fairly modest and cautious, but are likely to rise over time as the wider area continues to improve.

Figure 18. Proposed arrangements for the southern end of the building



6 Capital Cost and Funding Strategy

6.1 Capital Cost Summary

A capital cost of £24.2m (excluding inflation) has been estimated by Ian Walker Associates for implementing the preferred scheme described in Section 5.

A summary breakdown of this is presented in Figure 21 and the key exclusions and assumptions are noted in Figure 19 and Figure 20.

The detailed build-up of the constituent elements is included in Appendix 12.

The information used to inform these estimates include existing building floor plans at Appendix 3; marked-up floor plans set out in Section 5.3; various historical photographs of the Reading Room and Theatre; and the YouTube published video: *Inside the Derelict Mechanics Institute Swindon*, 2019 by TheSecretVault.

It is important to highlight that the budget includes a provision for pedestrianising part of Emlyn Square, which should fall outside of the Mechanics' Institute budget (or at least, be shared across other infrastructure business cases) and the inclusion of VAT, some of which may be recoverable depending on the procurement strategy.

Figure 19. Exclusions

1. Price inflation (estimated at 4% pa)
2. Renewable energy installations

Figure 20. Assumptions

1. Traditional form of competitive procurement
2. Works to have a duration of some 104 weeks
3. Contractor will be able to obtain consent to partially close an adjacent street for a compound area
4. Contractor may work a standard working week and have access out of hours if required
5. The building is stripped out generally where structures, finishes and fittings are damaged/beyond reasonable repair. Reinstatement is on the basis of modern finishes and fitting-out but with modern replication of historical finishes in principal rooms
6. Opportunity is taken to improve thermal performance of the building including internal wall insulation, creation of warm roof and secondary glazing to windows
7. An allowance has been included for removal of asbestos, but a survey is required to identify if/where asbestos may be present
8. An allowance has been included for the removal of accumulated pigeon guano, which is considered a health and safety hazard. Other hazards associated with historical buildings may be present including arsenic in wallpapers, lead in paints, anthrax spores in plasters and stored chemicals. A survey is required to assess all hazards.
9. Risk allowances have been included at design stage to cover development and firming up of the design and scope of works and at construction stage to cover unforeseen work revealed as the works progress.

Figure 21. Capital Cost Plan

December 2019		
Building Envelope		
Roof		£2,850k
External walls		£852k
External Doors and Windows		£1,633k
Internal Work		
Stripping out		£339k
Basement		£61k
WC provision		£252k
Circulation areas		£590k
Storage		£93k
Business units		£194k
Offices/meeting rooms		£181k
Café/Bar/Kitchen		£347k
Entrance/Main Lobby		£161k
Reading Room		£374k
Lecture rooms/cinema		£295k
Auditorium (1F)		£551k
Space above F5		£184k
Balcony		£117k
Building Services		£2,895k
Audio Visual & Interpretation		£1,000k
External works		
External works to building, drainage, external services		£163k
Pedestrianisation of Emlyn Square (one side)		£321k
	SUB-TOTAL	£13,452k
Risk (Contingency allowance)	15%	£2,018k
	SUB-TOTAL INCLUDING RISK	£15,470k
Preliminaries	9%	£1,392k
TOTAL: ESTIMATED CONTRACT SUM		£16,862k
Professional Fees	16%	£2,698k
	TOTAL: ESTIMATED PROJECT COST EXCLUDING VAT	£19,560k
Allowances:		
Loose furniture, blinds, curtains		£553k
Staging system		£35k
VAT	20%	£4,030k
TOTAL: ESTIMATED PROJECT COST INCLUDING FEES AND VAT		£24,178k

6.2 Phasing options and capital budget implications

Options for phasing the restoration have been considered by the team.

This would not be an ideal situation, as it would perpetuate the negative perceptions arising from the incomplete restoration of the building and would inevitably lead to future disruption of the operational

business when the later works are finally implemented. That said, without the certainty of capital funding sources, it remains an important alternative approach to examine.

The following notes set out the team's views and advice for phasing:

- The roof and elevations should be completed in a single phase to address the structural integrity of the building and to make the entire building watertight. Phasing these elements would add significant additional cost and disruption, and the trade-off would be too great.
- In theory, one could avoid replacing the windows and external joinery and conducting lower-level masonry repairs to areas of the building that are mothballed until a subsequent phase (ensuring that they are at least watertight). However, this will add additional capital cost overall and will inevitably lead to a poorer external aesthetic, which will be unpopular with some stakeholders and could reduce the uptake and performance of the operating businesses.
- The most plausible and practical phasing option (to achieve a reduced phase 1 capital budget) would be the mothballing of the southern half of the building, after the 'building envelope' works are completed. By phasing the 'internal works' for the following items, an total estimated phase 1 capital budget reduction of around £3m could be achieved:
 - Reading Room (£374k)
 - Five units accessed from the Southern elevation (£194k)
 - Associated circulation areas (£118k – based on 20% saving)
 - Lecture rooms/Cinema (£295k)
 - Audio Visual / interpretation budget (£400k – based on 40% saving)
 - Pedestrianisation of Emlyn Square (£321k)
 - Risk reduction (£255k)
 - Preliminaries reduction (£176k)
 - Professional fees reduction (£341k)
 - Loose furniture, blinds and curtains (£138k – based on 25% saving)
 - Staging system (£9k – based on 25% saving)
 - VAT (£524k)
- It is however important to note that the cost of implementing the above items later on would be greater (as a result of them forming a second stand-alone package of works), and the operational performance of the new business will be negatively affected due to the more limited offer delivered during phase 1 and the disruption caused by the phase 2 works while being implemented.

It is the team's view that for the relatively small saving one could achieve by phasing the works (i.e. £3m saving for phase 1), the combination of added capital cost to the phase 2 works, together with the negative impact on the building's operation and perceptions of the scheme, would have a larger and more

detrimental impact than completing the scheme in one go. To that end, if a funding route to securing the entire capital requirement remains possible, then it would be wiser to hold out until such time that the additional £3m could be secured rather than proceed with a phased scheme.

6.3 Pre-operational Capitalised Budget

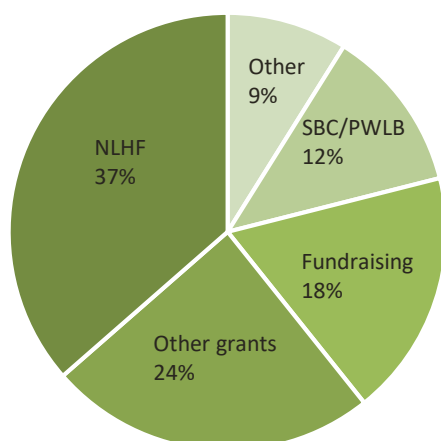
For projects like these, pre-operational costs will be incurred in the lead-up to opening and launching the facility. These costs will be one-off expenditure items covering pre-opening operational staff appointments, staff recruitment and training, facility and systems testing, pre-launch marketing and launch event, event contract preparation, supplier procurement, and so on. It is advised that an allowance of £500k be set aside for pre-operational activities and that this should be capitalised and therefore included as part of the project's capital fundraising campaign.

6.4 Capital funding strategy

The funding strategy will need to draw from a plethora of sources and on a range of partnerships to succeed.

Set out below is an indicative funding mix, based on our experience of other projects and from our review of potential sources.

Figure 22. Indicative Funding Mix



6.4.1 National Lottery Heritage Fund

Assuming a capital budget of £24.7m (combining both capital costs of £24.2m and pre-operational costs of £500k), the largest contribution is assumed to be £9m (37% of the total budget) from the National Lottery Heritage Fund's Horizon Awards. Unlike the NLHF's main capital grants scheme, which is capped at a maximum of £5m, the Horizon Awards are not capped. The fund's initial value has been set at £100m, with expressions of interest closing in September 2019 for the first wave (2020/21) for 50% / £50m of the fund. The fund was heavily over-subscribed with 146 applications totalling £1.3 billion

(giving an average of £9m). The timing for the next wave of applications, assumed to be for the remaining £50m, has not yet been confirmed, but is unlikely to be before the second half of 2020.

While the fund is very competitive, Mechanics' Institute is strongly aligned with NLHF's priorities which seek to be *"backing big ideas, unlocking possibilities"* in projects that are *"transformative, innovative, collaborative"* and meet one of two strategic priorities either: *"heritage at risk"* or *"landscapes and nature"*.

Although lottery funds are not distributed on a geographical basis, it is worth noting that Swindon has received substantially less funding from the lottery on a per capita basis than most other areas of similar scale across the UK.

The NLHF should be viewed as a catalyst fund for the Mechanics' Institute i.e. securing a successful grant award will help to unlock other funding.

6.4.2 Other grants

In all, 24% of the funding mix is assumed to come from other grant sources such as Historic England (a commitment of c.£500k has already been made), Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership and other trusts and foundations that align with the interests and focus of the Mechanics' Institute e.g. arts, business, creative industries and education. Some examples include:

- The Paul Hamlyn Foundation: The foundation has a particular interest in the arts and in supporting young people, aiming to distribute around £25 million per annum, usually in the form of grant-funding or, in some cases, loans to organisations.
- Wolfson Foundation: An independent charity that awards grants to support and promote excellence in the fields of science, health, education and arts & humanities. The Trustees aim to distribute at least 4% of the fund on an annual basis, which has broadly equated to approximately £30 million in recent years.
- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation: An organisation which aims to improve the quality of life for people and communities in the UK presently and also in the future. In 2018 the Foundation made grants totalling £40.5 million.
- Garfield Weston Foundation: A family founded, charitable grant making foundation which supports a wide range of causes across the UK and donates over £70 million each year. The Foundation has a focus on arts, education, community, health and wellbeing and youth.

6.4.3 Fundraising (corporates, individuals)

Local benefactors and legacies are likely to be an important source of capital support, including both cash and in-kind contributions that offset capital items. A further 18% of the capital budget (or £4.5m) is assumed to come from this source). Such relationships typically take time to nurture and secure. A well-planned fundraising strategy should be developed by an expert in this field. Targets will include: local high-net worth individuals either resident in the area or who originated from Swindon; and successful

local and national businesses located in the area or that have a connection to the Mechanics' Institute and its history.

6.4.4 Swindon Borough Council

Another 12% of the capital budget (or £3m) has been assumed to come from Swindon Borough Council. This could either take the form of a grant or loan from the Public Works Loan Board (or a combination of the two). This would be in addition to the sunk costs for the emergency works that have already been expended, which are outside of the capital cost plan – which would need to be either written off or covered by additional means.

The Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) is a statutory body operating within the United Kingdom Debt Management Office, an Executive Agency of HM Treasury. Its function is to lend money from the National Loans Fund to local authorities, and to collect the repayments. Since 2004, major local authorities have been able to borrow without government consent, provided they are satisfied that they can afford the borrowing costs. In order to comply with this, they are required by law to 'have regard' to the Prudential Code, published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The PWLB requires assurance from the authority that it is borrowing within relevant legislation and its borrowing powers. SBC's current borrowing rate is 3%.

There may also be an option to contribute capital receipts resulting from the disposal of Swindon Borough Council assets to the scheme, although no specific assets were identified as part of this study.

6.4.5 Other

Finally, 9% of the capital budget (or £2.2m) is assumed to come from other sources that may include:

- Strategic partners e.g. Royal Agricultural University (related to their investment in the Cultural Heritage Institute and potential use of the Mechanics' Institute) and UK Research and Innovation and the National Trust, who are located within close proximity.
- Sponsorship or naming rights for the Mechanics' institute or elements of it (although this may not be deemed acceptable to the partners).
- Section 106 or CIL contributions from nearby property developments.
- Tenant and operator investment that offsets capital expenditure.
- Crowd funding initiatives and investments enabling organisations and individuals to set up fundraising campaigns to attract donations from people who may be supportive or passionate about a project or an idea. e.g. Crowdfunder, Crowdrise and GoFundMe.

7 Project Delivery Programme

An indicative programme has been developed and presented in Figure 23 below with the key assumptions set out in Figure 24.

This covers the design development and construction phases of work only and spans a duration of approximately four and a half years, with an indicative start date in June 2020 (although the overall timing will certainly slip, possibly by a year or two at least).

At this stage, it is not clear when the design development process would commence as it is assumed to be conditional on the ownership of the building being resolved and initial funding commitments being secured to develop capital funding applications. The timings of both of these remain unclear. That said, a funding application to the NLHF would typically take at least two years from the commencement of the application process to award but would run in parallel with some of the early design development, client review and planning stages listed in Figure 23.

Figure 23. Indicative project delivery programme

	Days	Start	Finish	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
RIBA Stage 0-1	111	11/06/2020	30/09/2020	■				
RIBA Stage 2	148	01/10/2020	26/02/2021		■			
Client Review	25	01/03/2021	26/03/2021		■			
RIBA Stage 3	137	29/03/2021	13/08/2021		■			
Planning	228	10/05/2021	24/12/2021		■			
RIBA Stage 4	221	18/10/2021	27/05/2022			■		
Main contractor procurement	209	21/04/2022	16/11/2022			■		
RIBA Stage 5	727	17/11/2022	13/11/2024				■	■
Practical completion		13/11/2024	13/11/2024					■

Figure 24. Programme assumptions

Consultant Appointments:

- It is assumed that all key consultants will be procured via OJEU⁹ Restricted Procedure. A Contract Notice will be published asking for expressions of interest to be submitted. Following that, a shortlist will be agreed, and preferred bidders will be invited to tender.
- It is assumed that the client (TBC) would manage appointments of all key consultants including the Project Manager and these would be undertaken concurrently. However, we have assumed that the Project Manager could be appointed one week before the rest of the consultants to have a chance to review the other consultants' appointments.
- Further specialist consultants would be appointed during RIBA Stage 2 and 3.
- There is an opportunity for the client to instruct the consultants to undertake their services up to RIBA Stage 2 and then, subject to funding, re-engage the consultants to proceed with RIBA Stages 3-6.

Surveys:

⁹ This may change depending on how the UK exits the EU

- It is assumed that the surveys would be defined and procured during RIBA Stage 0-2, but there is an opportunity to proceed with this activity during the consultants' appointments period.

Planning

- No special consideration or assumptions have been built in for Listed Building Consent.
- The planning application would be submitted based on completed RIBA Stage 3 design.
- It is assumed that RIBA Stage 4 design development would only commence once planning consent has been secured, immediately after the planning determination. Note, the extended 'planning' bar in Figure 23, which overlaps with RIBA Stage 4, relates to additional planning tasks such as S106 negotiation, the formal receipt of paperwork etc. beyond the planning determination.

Main Contractor Procurement:

- It is assumed that a traditional procurement route would be used.
- The main contractor would be procured via a single stage tender, based on RIBA Stage 4 design. This will allow the best cost certainty to the client.
- It is assumed a single contract will be awarded for the soft strip/enabling works and the main construction works.

Construction:

- Timings are assumed to be a period of 2 months for contractor's mobilisation/lead in, 21 months for Shell and Core works and 4 months for fit-out works, testing and commissioning and handover.
- We would recommend assuming a 10% contingency in the programme, which equates approximately to a six-month float.

8 Operational Assumptions and Projections

8.1 Ownership, Governance and Management

At the time of this study, the freehold title of the Mechanics' Institute is understood to be held in private ownership by Forefront Estates Ltd¹⁰. In 2017, an administrative restoration application was made to Companies House for this company, together with the submission of outstanding annual returns from 2012 to 2016.

Legal notices have continued to be served by Swindon Borough Council on the company seeking to obtain the necessary access for essential works and surveys to be undertaken, although no response has been received.

Swindon Borough Council has indicated a willingness to rely on its statutory powers in order to move ownership so as to – subject to a viable scheme being identified – facilitate the acquisition and transfer of the property to a third party who would then take on the development and associated liabilities.

Representatives of Swindon Borough Council have confirmed the council's current position that it is not willing to take on the project itself or to retain a freehold interest, but this may change as greater certainty is gained over the viability of any scheme.

The obvious third party to take on the project would be the Mechanics' Institution Trust – a social enterprise that operates as a Building Preservation Trust and Development Trust. However, it is recognised and accepted by the Trust's directors, and the partners of this study, that it does not currently have the capacity or skills to take on such a large project. In time, this could be rectified and is certainly an ambition expressed by the Trust's directors. The organisation's capacity building is an area where the National Trust – headquartered in Swindon – could potentially provide considerable support on an interim basis. This has been broached through initial consultations with representatives of the National Trust, with positive views being expressed, but no firm commitments have been made at this stage.

For the purposes of this study, we have assumed that the third party taking on the development is either the Mechanics' Institution Trust itself or a body with similar purpose and objects, and sufficient resources, skills and experience to take on the project. It is assumed that the entity would have a wholly owned trading subsidiary through which the commercial activities of the business would operate, enabling any profits to be covenanted back to the parent organisation.

The third-party organisation and its trading subsidiary would hold the title of the asset and enter into a range of necessary agreements with, for example, funders, contractors and tenants. The organisation would also employ the staff required to operate the facility and take day-to-day responsibility for its management and performance.

¹⁰ Company Number: 04653080

8.2 Basis of Projections

The operational projections set out in Section 8.4 represent a maturing state of the business that is assumed to arise in year three after launch, by which point the initial hype surrounding the launch will have passed, operational teething problems will have been ironed out and the venue will have established itself within the marketplace. Taking the planning and construction timescales into consideration, the actual timing of year three might not occur until around 2028, which would provide even greater time to plan and develop the new business.

The baseline projections represent 'reasonable' and 'balanced' assumptions across the various income and expenditure items, taking into account the vision and aspiration for the venue, local market factors and benchmarked data gathered from a range of comparator venues.

The operational projections, unless otherwise stated, exclude VAT and inflation.

In Section 8.5 we have illustrated the 10 year operational income and expenditure profile. This assumes a gradual ramp-up of each income and expenditure line item to the mature state in year 3, with the figures being flexed up and down after that to reflect a typical longer-term revenue pattern.

8.3 Business Strategy and Focus

The appraisal of principal uses summarised in Section 4 identified a market gap in Swindon for a high quality, mid-sized venue for business events and conferences.

In addition, the weddings market remains buoyant, with current options in Swindon for larger receptions being limited to hotels or larger venues situated in the surrounding hinterland.

The history and heritage of the Mechanics' Institute has the potential to offer a unique and attractive premium for both these market opportunities.

The business strategy for the Mechanics' Institute proposes to adopt a core revenue focus on these two events markets (i.e. business and wedding receptions) to underpin its operational financial viability and enable it to operate as a multi-purpose venue, with a broader supporting range of arts, cultural, education and community programming.

To this end, the emphasis of the business will be on marketing and selling a quality venue rather than on programming and delivering events per se. Building strong relationships with business and conference networks and wedding planners will be key to the business's success.

A large new venue in Swindon will have demand implications for other businesses operating in the sector and that specifically target commercial events business. However, rather than compete for existing business, the development strategy for the Mechanic's Institute seeks to grow the overall market in Swindon, which would then present new opportunities for other businesses up and down the event-sector supply chain e.g. STEAM and other venues, hotels and the hospitality trade more generally, event promoters and managers etc.

8.4 Operational Financial Projections (Mature State, Year 3)

8.4.1 Income and Expenditure Summary

It is projected that by Year 3 – the assumed 'mature state' – the venue will be capable of generating a healthy surplus, equivalent to 15% of gross profit or 8% of total turnover. This is summarised in Figure 25 below with detailed commentary on the income and expenditure assumptions set out in Sections 8.4.2 and 8.4.3 respectively.

These projections exclude any additional income from either grants or sponsorship deals, which are assumed to represent 'upside' only at this stage.

Figure 25. Summary annual income and expenditure (mature state)

	£
INCOME	
Events (gross income)	£1,450k
Events (direct costs)	(£728k)
Events (gross profit)	£722k
Rent roll	£99k
Other income	£50k
Gross Profit	£871k
EXPENDITURE	
Staff	(£274k)
Overheads	(£429k)
Reserve	(£37k)
Expenditure	(£740k)
Net Profit/(Surplus)	£131k

8.4.2 Income Assumptions

As noted above, the focus of the business will be on securing high-value meeting, conference and wedding hires, which will largely be held in the Reading Room and Auditorium, given their scale and kudos. (Note, these types of events represent 79% of event-related gross profit and 66% of total gross profit for the business.)

Figure 26 below sets out the detailed assumptions for the venue hire projections by individual room and event type.

The gross income has been built up from the average assumed attendance per event, an average income per person (covering both venue hire and F&B spend) and the number of events projected against different categories and rooms within the venue.

An average gross profit margin has then been applied, the scale of which depends on the nature of the event. For example, the hire of a small meeting rooms has a relatively high margin since there will be limited direct costs involved in selling and managing the hire. For larger events, on the other hand, which

include more sizeable rental values and F&B provision (e.g. weddings, banquets etc.), the margins are set much lower to take account of greater direct costs.

The gross profit achieved per event (that assumes a combination of dry hire and F&B spend), which ranges from £45 for hiring a small meeting room to £10,000 for hiring the entire venue (see Figure 27), has been cross-checked with comparable venues and is considered reasonable.

The projections assume that most events are focused around a single room, albeit with access to the common areas for arrival, break-out and support services.

An additional category has been assumed for the entire venue being hired out for a single event, namely "All venue hire". Unsurprisingly, this category of event is anticipated to generate the highest gross profit, but this type of event is only anticipated to occur on a small number of occasions per annum.

In reality, it is likely that the individual rooms across the venue could be bundled and sold together in multiple configurations. At this stage we have sought to simplify the business planning projections by avoiding this extra and unnecessary degree of complication.

Figure 28 illustrates the volume and value of events by individual room (and for the "all venue hire" category). Meetings, conference and wedding events being staged in the Reading Room and Auditorium (or both) make up the large proportion of gross profit, while the smaller meeting rooms (available for hire on an hourly rather than daily basis) contribute most to the overall volume of events.

Earlier, it was noted that this business, within the Mechanics' Institute, is unlikely to launch until at least 2025 (taking into consideration the planning and construction timeframes). However, there is no reason why events-related business cannot be developed and nurtured within the Swindon market-place that is designed to transfer into the Mechanics' Institute once operational. For example, it is recommended that Swindon establishes itself as the UK's centre for heritage-led regeneration by developing an annual conference for the industry, with fringe events occurring year-round. This strategy will help in accelerating the business's growth from launch and mitigate operational risk.

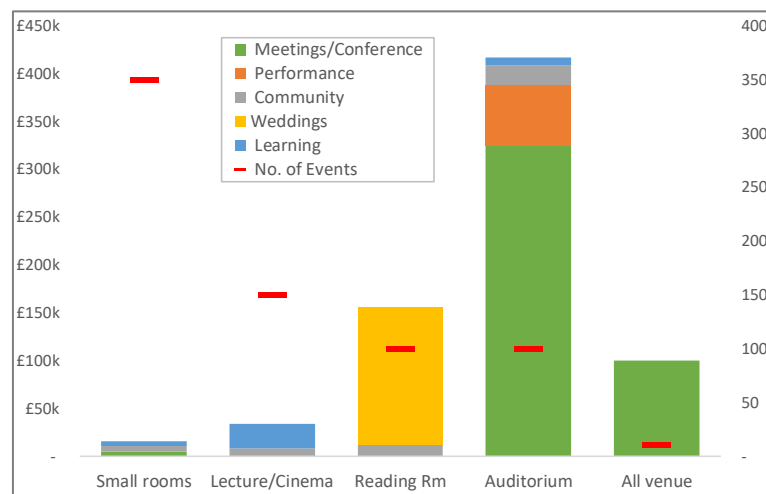
Figure 26. Event hires: average attendance, pricing and volume of events

	<i>Ave people</i>	<i>Ave £/ person</i>	<i>Ave £/ event</i>	<i>No. of events</i>	<i>Gross Income</i>	<i>Gross Profit %</i>	<i>Gross Profit</i>
Small room hires	5	£10.00	£50	350	£17,500	90%	£15,750
Lecture/Cinema	50	£5.00	£250	150	£37,500	90%	£33,750
Reading Rm - weddings	120	£60.00	£7,200	50	£360,000	40%	£144,000
Reading Rm - community	120	£5.00	£600	50	£30,000	40%	£12,000
All venue hire	400	£50.00	£20,000	10	£200,000	50%	£100,000
Auditorium - banquet	250	£70.00	£17,500	25	£437,500	40%	£175,000
Auditorium - theatre	350	£7.50	£2,625	40	£105,000	80%	£84,000
Auditorium - conference	300	£25.00	£7,500	35	£262,500	60%	£157,500
				710	£1,450,000		£722,000

Figure 27. Average gross profit by room and event type

	<i>Ave Gross Profit</i>
Small room hires	£45
Lecture/Cinema	£225
Reading Rm - weddings	£2,880
Reading Rm - community	£240
All venue hire	£10,000
Auditorium - banquet	£7,000
Auditorium - theatre	£2,100
Auditorium - conference	£4,500

Figure 28. Volume and value of events by room and event category



A modest rental income – totalling £99k per annum – has been assumed from the tenanted areas of the building, which include the five units that will be accessed from the southern entrance of the Mechanics' Institute and the additional floor to be inserted into the fly tower above the stage.

This includes allowance for voids, marketing and legal costs.

We have assumed a rental level equivalent to what is anticipated within the Carriage Works' redevelopments and therefore corresponds to B1 class (business). It is plausible that higher rental levels could be achieved in the ground floor units as A1 class (i.e. shops or galleries) – given their active frontages onto Emlyn Square – or in the fly tower as A3 class (i.e. restaurant) or indeed, for the five southern units as C1 (i.e. serviced apartments). At this stage, however, the projections are taking a cautious view.

Figure 29. Rent roll

	Area (sq.m)	£/sqft/pa	£/sqm/pa	Void/ cost allowance	£
Five Units	522	£16.50	£177.60	20%	£74,168
New floor in Fly Tower	175	£16.50	£177.60	20%	£24,865

Finally, we have assumed an additional £50k of income, which could be generated through a variety of means including, but not limited to: additional kitchen/café trade above and beyond the event delegate F&B spends, commission on sales of artwork showcased in the building, sponsorship, grants etc.

8.4.3 Expenditure assumptions

The operational expenditure has been separated into three parts.

Firstly, the core staff employed to sell and manage the venue; secondly, the overheads of the business and thirdly, a sizeable reserve budget (equivalent to 5% of all expenditure) that acts as an additional contingency and/or sinking fund for significant replacement and/or future business development. These costs are assumed to be fixed and are therefore not anticipated to fluctuate from year to year.

Direct costs that are incurred to facilitate the delivery of individual events (e.g. additional production staff and event-specific costs) are assumed to fall outside of these core expenditure items and will be recharged back to the customer who is hiring the space(s). This will demand a meticulous accounts management system and regime to identify, log and recharge expenses efficiently.

The core staff employed by the venue will have a strong skills bias towards marketing and sales, and should have expertise in the meetings, conference and weddings sectors.

The core staff team, summarised in Figure 30, includes eight full-time equivalents (FTE) and carries a gross staff cost (including salaries and on-costs) of £274k.

At this stage we have assumed that the operation is stand alone. If the parent organisation managing the Mechanics' Institute has a number of similar business interests, then one would expect to achieve some further efficiencies and economies of scale across the operational expenditure.

Figure 30. Summary income and expenditure on staff

STAFF	FTE	Salary	Oncost (15%)	Gross Salary
Manager	1.0	£45k	£7k	£52k
Finance	1.0	£40k	£6k	£46k
Sales & Marketing	1.5	£35k	£8k	£60k
Admin	1.0	£18k	£3k	£21k
Duty Manager	1.0	£26k	£4k	£30k
Technical	1.5	£26k	£6k	£45k
Porter	1.0	£18k	£3k	£21k
	8.0			£274k

The total overheads of the venue are projected at £429k for the mature state (Year 3) of operation. These are summarised in Figure 31 and described below.

The scale of overheads reflects an ambition for the venue to become a centre for civic pride, as well as being a commercial success.

At this stage, we are more concerned with the headline figures rather than their detailed make-up and breakdown. The figures have been benchmarked where possible with data from other comparable venues and facilities.

- Finance, Audit and HR – covering annual reporting, statutory requirements and staff recruitment and training.
- Marketing – a sizeable marketing budget has been assumed, which is equivalent to 4% of gross events profit (9% of gross events income) – reflecting the commercial intent of the venue and the need to aggressively build networks and partnerships, and to promote and raise awareness of the venue at local, regional and national levels.
- Event technical – the scale of event technical budget aligns with the capital budget assumptions for technical fixtures and equipment. This budget also provides for periodic inspections of lighting, health and safety requirements etc.
- Building maintenance – an average annual allowance has been included for planned and preventative maintenance. In the early operational years, the cost of maintenance will be low as a result of building and equipment warranties. The expenditure profile in later years will likely include less frequent but higher levels of expenditure i.e. it will act like a sinking fund for more significant repairs and upgrades.
- Facilities management – assumed to cover 24 hour CCTV building security, lift servicing (on emergency call out basis), general cleaning and waste collection.
- Utilities – the current budget equates to an allowance of c.£21/m² across the gross building area. The scale of utilities' expenditure will have a direct correlation to the environmental qualities and energy performance of the building.
- Insurances – assumed to cover buildings, contents, public and employer liabilities.
- Business rates – a prudent allowance has been included for business rates, recognising the commercial nature of some of the business activities taking place. It is likely that some rate relief will be achieved.
- Rent – assumed to be nil as the operating entity will own the building.
- IT – assumed to cover a reasonable specification of internet connectivity and servicing to address the venue's requirements, event technical and public WiFi.

- Legal and professional – to cover legal advice typically relating to new or unusual promoter and supplier contracts and HR matters. This will complement related allowances made within the 'Finance, Audit and HR' budget.
- Admin – to cover the venue's general office related expenditure such as: phones, stationery, printing, travel and sundry expenses.
- Contingency – to provide a contingency buffer across these overhead items.

Figure 31. Overheads

<i>Overheads</i>	<i>Mature state</i>
Finance / Audit	£9k
HR	£9k
Marketing	£64k
Event technical	£17k
Building maintenance/sinking fund	£43k
Facilities management	£64k
Utilities	£64k
Insurances	£22k
Business rates	£64k
Rent	-
IT	£13k
Legal & professional services	£9k
Admin	£22k
Contingency	£30k
	£429k

8.5 10 year Income and Expenditure

A 10 year income and expenditure profile is presented in Figure 32 and illustrated in Figure 33. For this, assumptions are included for the gradual build-up of income streams over the first three years, reflecting the fact that the venue will take time to establish itself in the market.

As noted above, expenditure is assumed to be largely made up of fixed costs, so will not fluctuate from year to year.

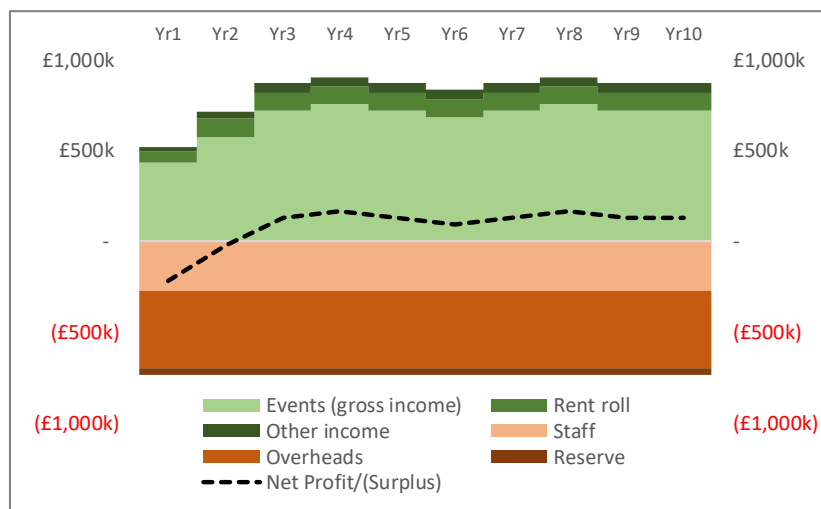
Strategies should be explored to reduce this build-up time such as: developing events business elsewhere while the Mechanics' Institute is being redevelopment that could be displaced or migrated into the Mechanics' Institute once launched; and venue partnering deals, whereby larger organisations make a commitment to hire a certain volume of space in the future at reduced rates.

Over the 10 year period, an accumulated profit of £840k is projected.

Figure 32. 10 year income and expenditure summary (table)

	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Yr6	Yr7	Yr8	Yr9	Yr10
INCOME										
Events (gross profit)	£433k	£578k	£722k	£758k	£722k	£686k	£722k	£758k	£722k	£722k
Rent roll	£59k	£99k	£99k	£99k	£99k	£99k	£99k	£99k	£99k	£99k
Other income	£30k	£40k	£50k	£50k	£50k	£50k	£50k	£50k	£50k	£50k
Gross Profit	£523k	£717k	£871k	£907k	£871k	£835k	£871k	£907k	£871k	£871k
EXPENDITURE										
Staff	(£274k)	(£274k)	(£274k)	(£274k)	(£274k)	(£274k)	(£274k)	(£274k)	(£274k)	(£274k)
Overheads	(£429k)	(£429k)	(£429k)	(£429k)	(£429k)	(£429k)	(£429k)	(£429k)	(£429k)	(£429k)
Reserve	(£37k)	(£37k)	(£37k)	(£37k)	(£37k)	(£37k)	(£37k)	(£37k)	(£37k)	(£37k)
Expenditure	(£740k)	(£740k)	(£740k)	(£740k)	(£740k)	(£740k)	(£740k)	(£740k)	(£740k)	(£740k)
Net Profit/(Surplus)	(£218k)	(£24k)	£131k	£167k	£131k	£95k	£131k	£167k	£131k	£131k

Figure 33. 10 year income and expenditure summary (graph)



8.5.1 Sensitivity Analysis

The operational model will be particularly sensitive to some of the income variables – notably, the volume and value of events, reflecting the team's success in marketing and selling the venue and the nature of deals struck with event hire customers.

As noted above, the baseline projections are considered reasonable and balanced on both the income and expenditure sides of the model. However, for this early stage of planning, it would be prudent to assume a potential range in the projected net profit for the Year 3 mature state (comparable to that described in the above sections) of between £50k (surplus) and £180k (surplus).

Appendices

1 Consultees

We are grateful to the following individuals for sharing their insights with us.

Gary Andrew	Local bridal / menswear shop owner
Claire Appleby	Theatres Trust
Andy Brown	Swindon Borough Council
Paul Chamberlain	Carriage Works / Swindon Borough Council
Andrea Christmas	Friends of Health Hydro
Sally Cole	Swindon Civic Voice / Mechanics' Institution Trust
Geraint Coles	Royal Agricultural University
Rebecca Cross	Diocese of Bristol / Pattern Church
Karsten Evans	Local resident
Gary Garitsis	Swindon Borough Council
Liz Smith Gibbons	Swindon Borough Council
Rod Hebden	Freelance Consultant (involved in SMAG NLHF bid)
Cllr Dale Heenan	Swindon Borough Council member
Simon Hickman	Historic England
Cllr Janine Howarth	Swindon Borough Council member
Ruth Lambert	Federation of Small Businesses
Ian Larrard	Business West
Mirabelle Mack	Swindon Borough Council
Hannah Parry	Mechanics' Institution Trust
Martha Parry	Mechanics' Institution Trust
Karen Phimister	Swindon Borough Council
Daniel Rose	Architectural Heritage Fund (formerly of Mechanics' Institution Trust)
Rachel Snowball	National Trust
Olivia Stockdale	Victorian Society
Kris Taliokovski	Switch on to Swindon
David Thackray	Mechanics' Institution Trust
Rohan Torkildsen	Historic England
Cllr Bob Wright	Swindon Borough Council member
Mark Warner	Swindon Borough Council

2 Summary of the Mechanics' Institute, Swindon

2.1 Background

The Mechanics Institute sits on Emlyn Square, at the heart of Swindon's Railway Village Conservation Area (CA), which was established by Wiltshire County Council in 1975. The Conservation Area lies immediately south of the London-Bristol railway line.

There is a separate Railway Works Conservation Area on the north side of the line, created in 1987. The two CAs are joined by a pedestrian-only subway. Together, the two CAs are regarded as the most complete example of an early planned railway works and village in the world.

The Railway Village was developed to a Brunel design from the early 1840s onwards as a home for GWR staff coming to work at the Railway Works. (At its peak, the Works employed 14,000 people.) The Mechanics' Institution was established initially as an educational and social organisation by and for GWR employees, organising classes, lectures and amateur dramatic productions. A permanent structure to house the Mechanics' Institution opened in 1855, designed by the architect, Edward Roberts, and financed by shares sold in a holding company established for the purpose, the 'New Swindon Improvement Company' (NSIC).¹¹

The premises included a large hall, dining and bathing facilities, reading room, and library as well as a covered market to serve the otherwise isolated but growing community. Constructed on the central 'Promenade' facing the crossing to the main GWR site, it became the hub of social life in the Village and the developing Town of New Swindon until at least the Second World War.

The premises were extended with the demolition of the market hall in 1892 (the organisation having bought back all the shares in the NSIC), doubling in size to include a vaulted reading room, four ancillary activity rooms overlooking the town, and an expanded and enhanced theatre. A further side wing facilitated library access from the west side in 1903.

During extension of the building in 1930 for library expansion and open access to the shelves (an innovation at the time), the stage area and room beneath were damaged by fire on Christmas Eve. Despite the looming Depression, a mortgage was taken out to create a larger stage, upholstered seating, a state-of-the-art fly tower for scenery, and a new Art Deco proscenium arch.

In 1960 the Mechanics' Institution (organisation) was forced financially to 'combine' with the British Rail Staff Association (BRSA), reflecting the contraction in the GWR workforce that had followed the nationalisation of the railways in 1948. This was the effective end of the original organisation, and in the following decades the premises were essentially a very large and active working men's club, offering dancing, theatricals and a range of other leisure pursuits.

¹¹ Historic England have produced a document about 'Mechanics' Institutions' as a generic building type, which outlines the significance of such institutes/institutions in the early education of the working/mechanic/artisan population. It notes the opportunity offered by the Swindon Institute: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/iha-mechanics-institutes/>

The Library collection was broken up in 1961, with core volumes including the present (since extended) Local Studies Collection shifted into Swindon Corporation (Council) ownership. (Due to the quality of the Mechanics' Library collection, the Council had not opened a local library before 1943.) The remaining volumes were adopted by Institution members and seldom turn up on the market. The theatre continued in operation as 'The Playhouse', hosting a repertory company and local amateur dramatic organisations. It hosted its last full production in 1970. (The Wyvern theatre opened in 1971.) It continued to be used as a rehearsal space for another decade but the deteriorating state of the auditorium and increasing fire safety regulations meant that even this ceased in 1980.

The premises eventually reverted to British Rail ownership, after the Staff Association failed financially in 1984. The Works closed altogether in 1986, and the premises were sold. For two years prior the Council had been negotiating to take ownership for £1 with the intention of making it a local arts and culture venue. In the end, though, the opportunity was declined, due to pressures from ratecapping and the anticipated cost of renovation (then estimated at £1-2 million).

Since the Mechanics' Institute's closure, three successive owners have failed to find a suitable new use for the building, despite planning consents (for a hotel, and for a partial residential scheme) having been granted. Its condition has deteriorated over time, leading to an Urgent Works schedule being issued in 2010.

Despite its extensive deterioration in private ownership, the Institute's premises could be an important part of the wider regeneration of the Railway Village. It (the Village) remains largely residential in character and the vast majority of the buildings in it date from before 1930 and are listed Grade II or II*. The Institute is now the last major building in the wider Railway Quarter (itself a recently used descriptor) without an appropriate use.¹²

Historic England has recently established one of the second tranche of national Heritage Action Zones (HAZ) in the area surrounding the Railway Village (which was recognised by Civic Voice as 'England's Favourite Conservation Area for 2018'), with SBC and MIT as its partners. The HAZ document noted Swindon has many economic strengths, but that *"in recent decades growth and investment have been concentrated on the outer edges of the town. This has diminished the town centre's role as the cultural, commercial and civic heart of the town."* The Mechanics' Institute is identified as one of the issues that needs to be addressed to remedy this.

2.2 Timeline of the Mechanics' Institute's history

The following table shows some of the key events and dates in the history of the Mechanics' Institute.

¹² The Mechanics Institution itself was originally listed at Grade II but was upgraded in 1998 to Grade II* following representations by the New Mechanics' Institution Preservation Trust Ltd., an initiative of local people: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1198947>. The * rating was allocated due to the belated recognition of the 'historic' rather than solely 'architectural' character of the Institute. This * warranted the Institute's subsequent inclusion on Historic England's 'Buildings At Risk' register for many years.

Figure 34: Key milestones

Key Milestone	Description	Date
Great Western Railway works open in Swindon	A Circulating Library was established in August 1843, beginning one of the earliest 'circulating libraries' in the country.	1843
Swindon Mechanics' Institution officially founded	The Institution grew strong and became a focal point of New Swindon social life. A proposal to fund a new building for the Institution was proposed by I.K. Brunel but 1847-9 recession prevented this plan.	January 1844
Initial design	Because of the site visibility from passing trains, Brunel applied Elizabethan and Jacobean motifs to the facades to impress. The architect chosen was Edward Roberts of London who used the Gothic Revival style. Initially, it was a two-storey building attached to an octagonal market hall.	1853 - 1855
Foundation stone	The Market Hall opened on 3 rd November 1854 and final completion was reached in April 1855.	24 May 1854
Proposal for a new Theatre on site of the Market Hall	The extension project did not proceed due to high costs.	1878
New extensions to the south	A major enlargement to the south in Jacobethan style by Brightwen Binyon of Ipswich.	1892 - 1893
Fire on the stage and New Stage Tower	After a Christmas Eve performance a fire started under the stage. The central part of the building was seriously damaged but the library and reading room were saved. The present stage tower was built in brick.	December 1930
Borough launched its own public library	Agreement for the acquisition of the Institute's library failed.	1943
Change of ownership	The Mechanics' Institution organisation was formally absorbed by the British Railways Staff Association.	1960
Library closed and use of rooms changed	Rooms were reutilised to meet other social functions. A bar lounge, dance floor and a skittle alley were incorporated.	1961
Listed Status	Listed Building Grade II	17 February 1970
Building Closure	British Rail works closed in 1986, causing the Mechanics' Institute's closure on 9 February 1986	1986
Building Purchase and Conveyance	Developer P.G. Forbes investigated the possibility of converting the northern area into a nightclub, purchasing the building in April 1987.	1987

	Protest by residents turned into an 'Action Group' to resist commercial development. The new owner abandoned the project.	
Building sale and proposal for conversion into a hotel	The building was sold to Lamplough Estates Ltd. Together with Mountmead Ltd (another Lamplough family company) it submitted a proposal for conversion of the building. Local community opposed the project. The application was refused on February 1989.	1988 - 1989
Appeal and planning consent granted with conditions	Despite the community opposition, the consent was granted.	1990
Fence erection	The project did not proceed and the building fell derelict and became a target for vandalism. The Borough Council erected a fence to stop negative incidents.	1990-1991
Property transfer to Mountmead Ltd of Cirencester	This was an internal transfer within the Lamplough family's companies	1991
Mechanics' Action Group (forerunner of MIT) set up		1995
Expiration of planning consent	The consent expired and was not renewed. The Borough, at the insistence of the community and Mechanics' Action Group, legally pressured the owners to carry out safety works to the building.	1995
Building upgraded to Grade II* listing		1999
Building sold to Forefront Estates (current owners)		2002
Proposal put forward by Forefront to develop site as hotel	The proposals were initially supported by SBC but local pressure led to central government 'calling in' the plans. This would have led to a public enquiry but the owner dropped the plans in 2005 just before any enquiry could start.	2003-2005
Proposal from Forefront for residential use	Proposal for residential use with enlarged replacement tower was rejected	2009
Urgent Works Notice and Works	An urgent works notice was issued to the owner and works were implemented in 2010 to secure the building	2009-2010
Forefront Estates dissolved then re-established	Forefront was dissolved in 2012 but re-established in 2018, enabling its owner, Matthew Singh, to reassert his ownership of the Mechanics' Institute	2012-

2.3 Historical uses and activities of the Mechanics' Institute

The history of the Mechanics' Institute is well documented. Since the organisations' constitution in 1844, the building and the activities taking place within it constantly evolved up until its closure in 1986. This evolution was driven by a combination of innovation, reaction to market trends and its surrounding context, and the provision of other activities within the town. From its beginnings, it played a central role in the life and community of new Swindon, acting as a civic and cultural hub. The breadth of uses and spaces within the building is summarised below.

Figure 35: Historical Uses and activities

Education:
➤ Reading room / early form of library
➤ Lectures
Health:
➤ Baths (removed 1864)
Leisure and Recreation:
➤ Refreshments through the canteen and bar facilities
➤ Lounge
➤ Performing arts (including theatre, dance, music)
➤ Dances
➤ Smoking (room)
➤ Snooker, Billiards, Bagatelle, Chess and Draughts
➤ Air pistol shooting (within an internal range)
➤ Skittles (in the dedicated skittle alley)
➤ Community celebrations (weddings)
Arts and Media Production:
➤ Recording and broadcast (Gleemen by BBC)
➤ Rehearsals (repertory theatre)
Retail:
➤ Market stalls (removed in late 19 th century)
➤ Shops
Administration:
➤ Meetings
➤ Caretakers flat (under the east wing of the main stage)

2.4 Historic England List Entry

2.4.1 Overview

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II*

Mechanics' Institute Viability Assessment

List Entry Number: 1198947

Date first listed: 17-Feb-1970

Statutory Address: The Mechanics' Institute, Emlyn Square

2.4.2 Location

Statutory Address: The Mechanics' Institute, Emlyn Square

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

District: Swindon (Unitary Authority)

National Grid Reference: SU 14580 84781

2.4.3 Details

SU 1484 NE 1097/6/90

Swindon, Emlyn Square, The Mechanics' Institute

17.02.70

GV

II* Former Mechanics' Institute, at present vacant. 1853-1855 by Edward Roberts of London. Considerably enlarged 1892-1893 by Brightwen Binyon.

Limestone rubble with ashlar quoins and dressings. Two-storey with raised central hall/theatre. Gothic Revival style. Ground floor: library and reading room, coffee room, mess room and baths, with entrance to north, facing works, and rear octagonal market hall opened 1855, now replaced. Ground floor triple entrances, painted segmental heads between buttresses, all in two-storey forebuilding. Cross windows above. Links to octagonal crenellated corner towers with slated spires and louvred lantern, the towers returning to square at ground level, and having Tudor-arched lights. Clocks in parapets. Behind forebuilding large Perpendicular style window to hall gable. Side buttresses and triple lights. Flat roofed attached single storey side buildings later in date, with Tudor glazing and entrance. Hipped slated corner canopies on bracketed cast-iron columns. Octagonal flanking lantern towers at south end of hall.

Major enlargement to south, 1892, in Jacobethan style. Coursed rock-faced rubble and slate roofs. Two-storey, two-bay end gables with Tudor three-light windows and carved quatrefoil in gables. Three-bay recessed centre with central Tudor door and recessed glazed gallery at first floor level. Four-light dormers and louvred lantern. Side elevations with projecting gable and hall with chamfered two-storey Tudor style windows; four dormers each side. Central theatre fly tower of 1930, built following a fire.

INTERIOR. In later section, in addition to various large rooms, an imposing five-bay reading room, with segmental vaulted ceiling and part-panelled walls. Theatre dressing rooms over. In earlier part, the first-floor assembly hall/theatre 76ft x 40ft with moulded plaster decorative frieze and vaulted ceiling. Stage with proscenium arch a semi-circular replacement of 1930, with moulded archivolt in art-deco style. Curving balcony with decorative front. (Original plan in The Builder, 1st July 1854).

HISTORY. This institute, which is the major architectural feature at the heart of Swindon Railway Village, is of considerable historic significance both for the mode of formation and for the range, importance and influence of the various facilities provided. The GWR set up a separate company, the New Swindon Improvement Co., as a workers' welfare venture, to build an institute, shops and market stalls all in one, fresh produce not being easily available. The original market stalls were demolished in 1891 to make room for the large addition which is itself a visible expression of the impressive breadth of the institute's work for over a 100 years. An extensive range of classes and lectures were provided for both men and women, and technical education was particularly important, this being harmonised with the progress of apprentices and students through the railway works itself. This institute also appears to be a unique survivor of one associated with a railway company.

BIBLIOGRAPHY : Transport History (K Hudson); Swindon Retrospect 1855-1930 (F Large), 1931; The Great Western at Swindon Works (A Peck), 1983; A Swindon History 1840-1901 (J Silto); The Builder, 1 July, 1854; Swindon: the Legacy of a Railway Town O Cattell and K Falconer), 1995; New Swindon Mechanics' Institution Preservation Trust, Lecture by T Cockbill, 1997.

Listing NGR: SU1458084781

2.4.4 Legacy

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number: 318752

Legacy System: LBS

2.4.5 Sources

Books and journals

Cattell, J, Falconer, K, Swindon: The Legacy of a Railway Town (RCHME), (1995)

Hudson, K, Transport History

Large, F , Swindon Retrospect 1855-1930, (1931)

Peck, A , The Great Western at Swindon Works, (1983)

Silto, J , A Swindon History 1840-1901

'The Builder' in 1 July, (1854)

2.4.6 Legal

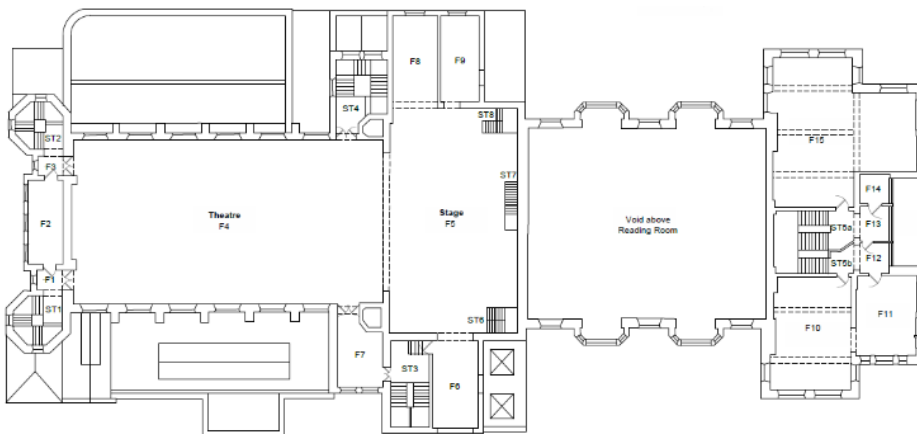
This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

3 Plans of the Mechanics' Institute

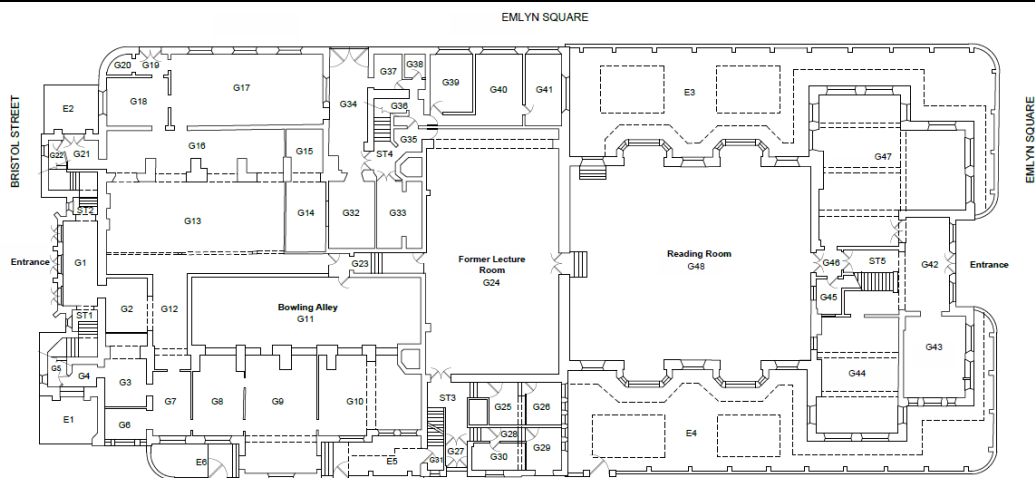
Drawings compiled by Donald Insall Associates based on the 'Statement of Urgent Works' report, October 2009.



SECOND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

EMLYN SQUARE

4 Schedule of areas

Room Reference	Description	Area (sqm)
GROUND FLOOR		
E1	exterior within boundary wall	15.40
E2	exterior within boundary wall	15.20
E3	exterior within boundary wall	209.50
E4	exterior within boundary wall	190.30
E5	exterior within boundary wall	19.00
E6	exterior within boundary wall	15.30
G1	main entrance hall	17.00
G2		13.10
G3		17.40
G4	side entrance hall	3.80
G5	WC under staircase	2.70
G6		7.50
G7		14.40
G8		22.80
G9		48.70
G10		43.30
G11	Former Bowling Alley	88.80
G12		19.30
G13		100.50
G14		16.60
G15		9.00
G16		42.20
G17		63.00
G18		17.40
G19		3.90
G20		2.50
G21	side entrance hall	5.50
G22	WC under staircase	2.30
G23		11.40
G24	former Lecture Room	190.30
G25		9.00
G26	WCs	8.80
G27		2.40
G28		2.90
G29	WCs	8.80
G30		8.50
G31	under staircase	3.60
G32		18.10
G33		17.20
G34	entrance hall	26.60
G35		3.40
G36	residual space under staircase	6.20
G37		5.80
G38	WC	2.80
G39		14.50
G40		22.40
G41		15.30
G42	main entrance hall	24.40
G43	WCs	29.20
G44		53.75
G45	residual space under staircase	6.45
G46		3.90
G47		101.60
G48	Reading Room	293.70

Mechanics' Institute Viability Assessment

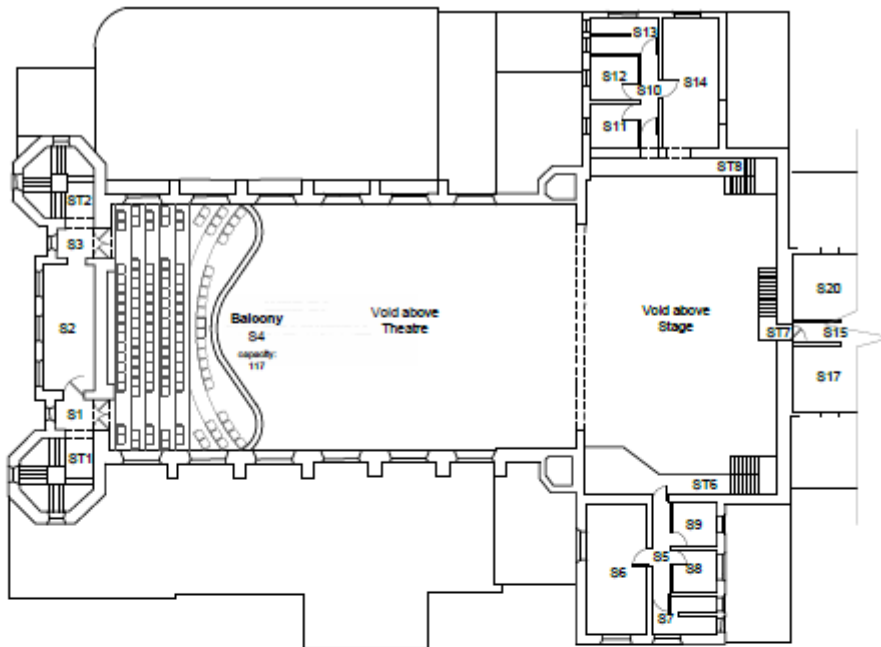
FIRST FLOOR		
F1	entrance hall to Theatre	3.10
F2		17.75
F3	entrance hall to Theatre	2.90
F4	Theatre	307.20
F5	Stage	174.40
F6	stage wing room	26.00
F7		18.50
F8	stage wing room	25.50
F9	stage wing room	19.80
F10		53.15
F11		29.30
F12		5.40
F13		6.10
F14		5.20
F15		102.30
SECOND FLOOR		
S1	entrance hall to Theatre balcony	3.75
S2		17.70
S3	entrance hall to Theatre balcony	3.60
S4	Theatre's Balcony	81.10
S5	stage wing room	4.30
S6	stage wing room	20.80
S7	stage wing room - WCs	6.70
S8	stage wing room	4.90
S9	stage wing room	5.20
S10	stage wing room	3.40
S11	stage wing room	5.60
S12	stage wing room	5.80
S13	stage wing room - WCs	6.50
S14	stage wing room	19.80
S15	corridor	5.00
S16	corridor	6.70
S17		12.70
S18		12.05
S19		12.10
S20		12.70
S21		12.05
S22		12.10
S23		58.90

5 Indicative theatre layout options

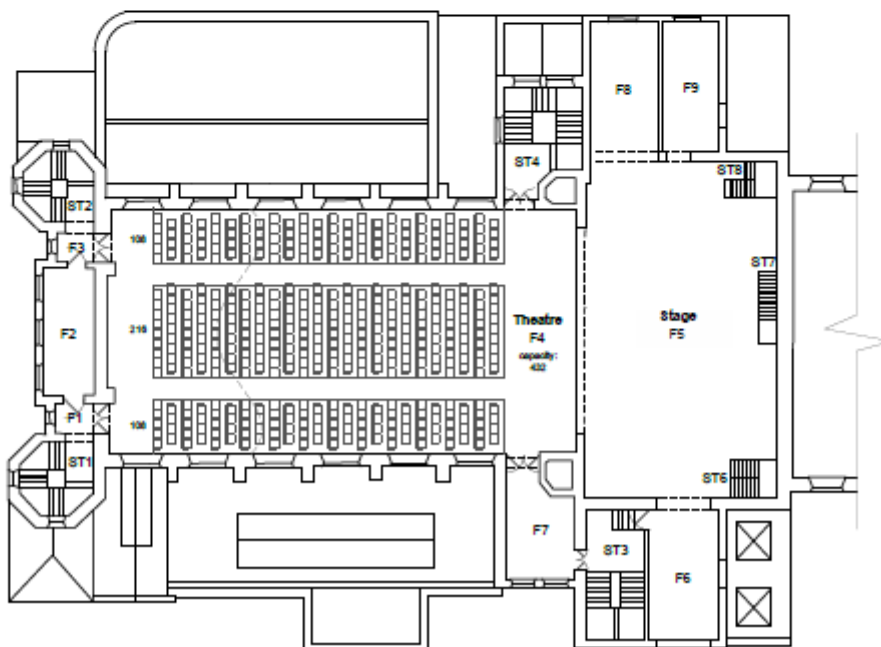
Options 1 and 2 use the minimum suggested width between seating and an allowance of 0.5sqm per person, whilst options 3 and 4 are more generous. Options 1 and 3 use the current layout, whilst options 2 and 4 look at extending the balcony to create more seating. The following theoretical capacities are generated:

- Minimal allowances:
 - Option 1: 549 (existing balcony)
 - Option 2: 639 (added balcony)
- More generous allowances:
 - Option 3: 456 (existing balcony)
 - Option 4: 511 (added balcony)

5.1 Option 1: 549 capacity (minimal allowance, existing balcony)



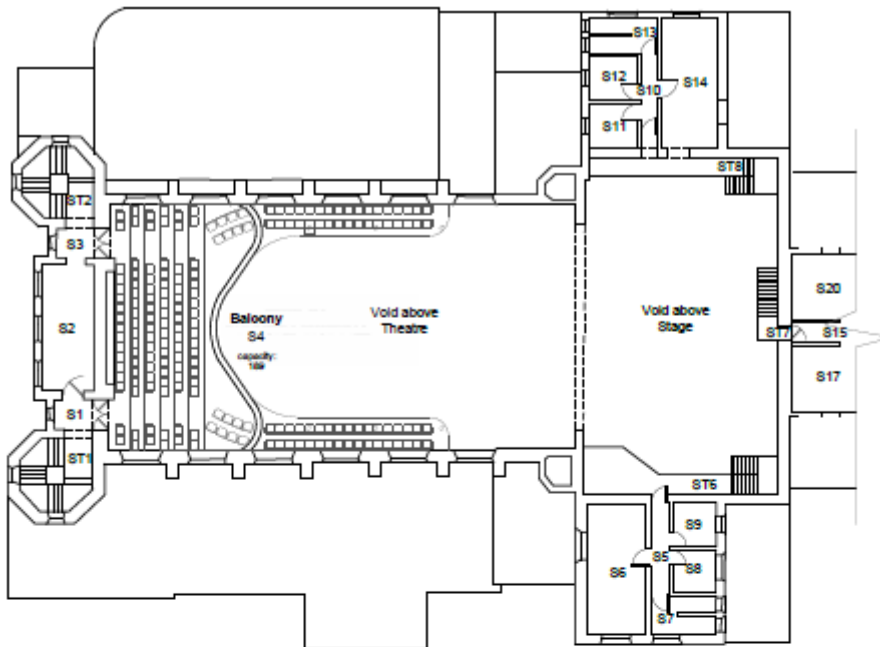
SECOND FLOOR PLAN



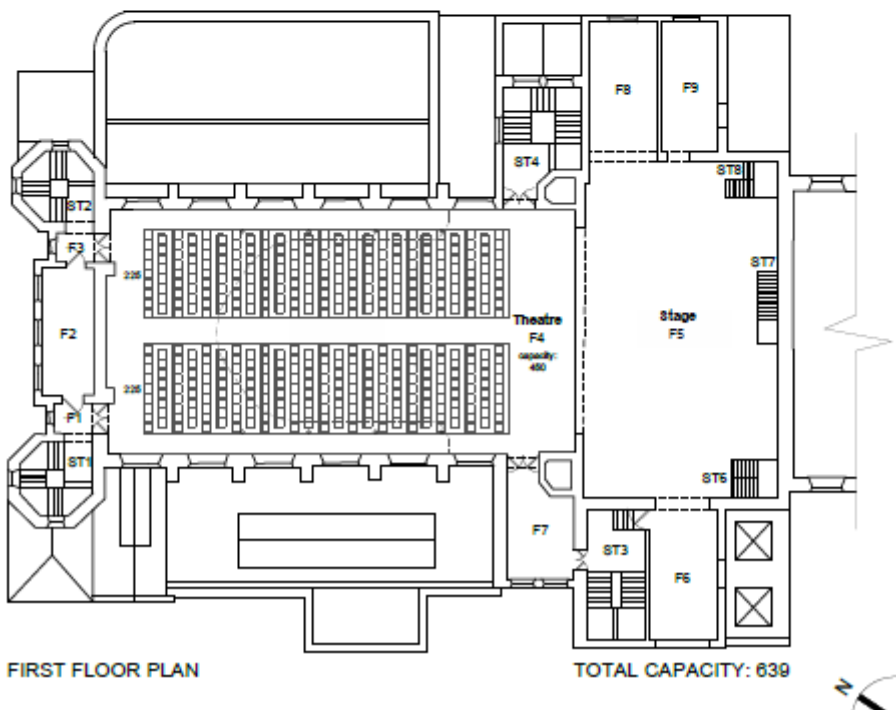
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

TOTAL CAPACITY: 549

5.2 Option 2: 639 capacity (minimal allowance, added balcony)



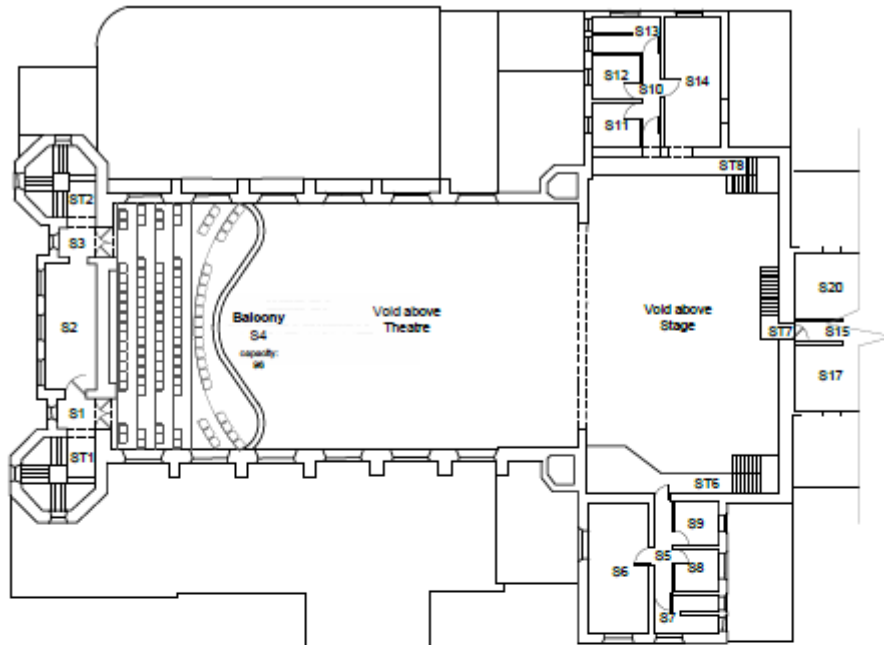
SECOND FLOOR PLAN



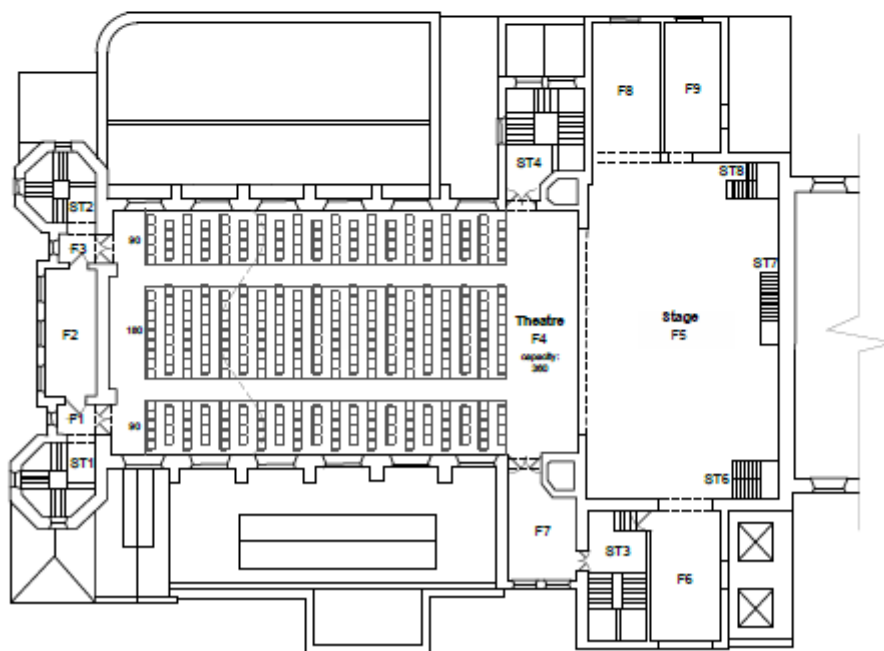
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

TOTAL CAPACITY: 639

5.3 Option 3: 456 capacity (more generous allowance, existing balcony)



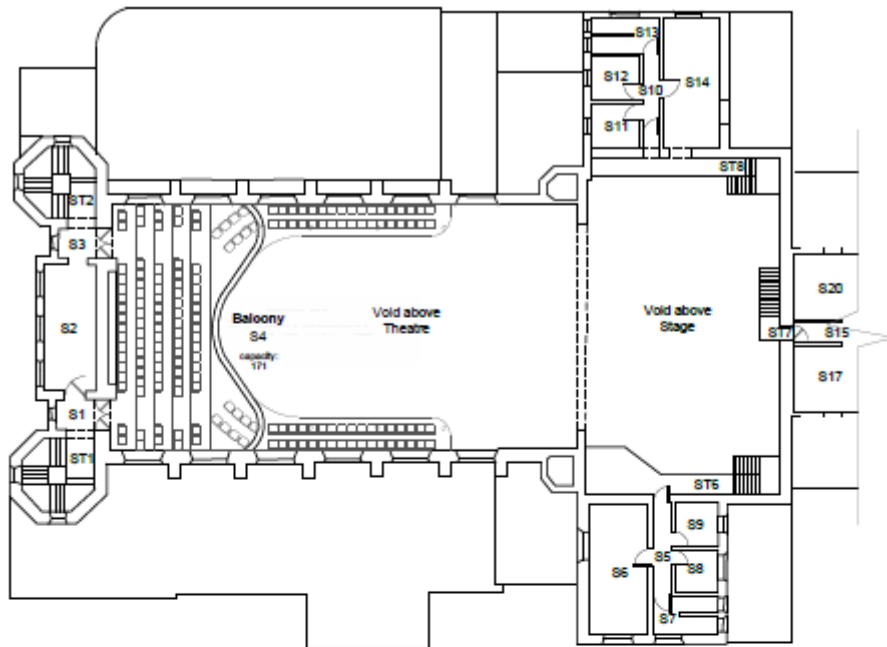
SECOND FLOOR PLAN



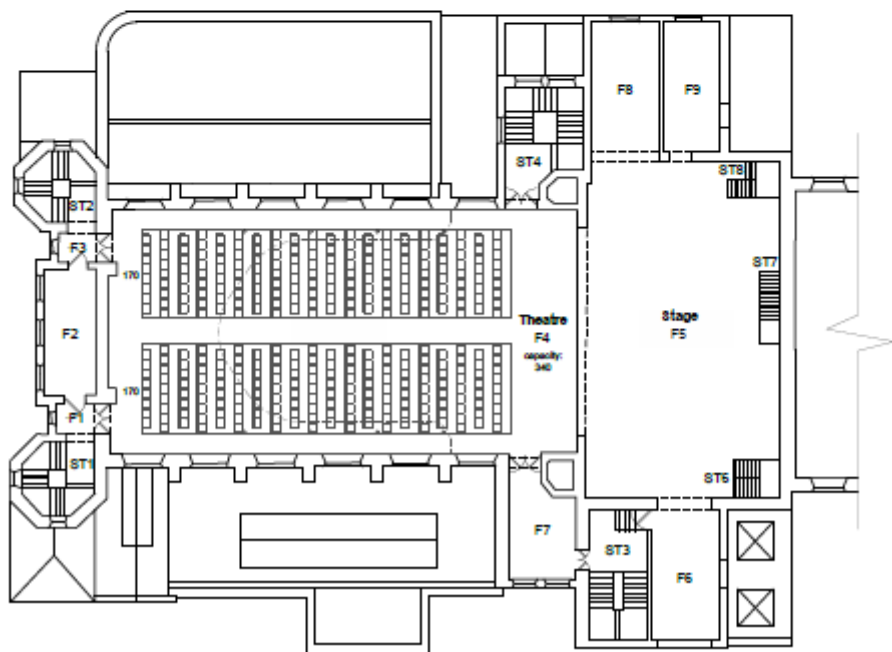
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

TOTAL CAPACITY: 456

5.4 Option 4: 511 capacity (more generous allowance, added balcony)



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

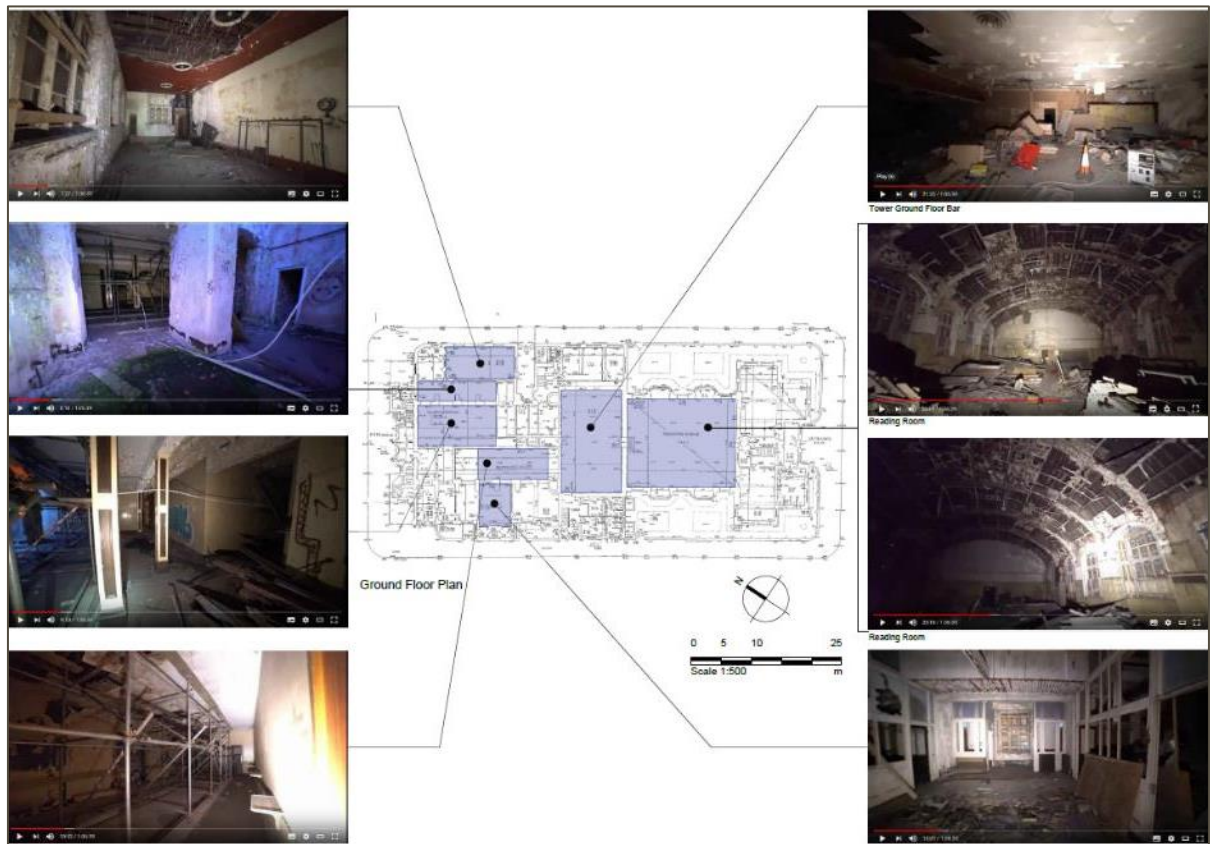


FIRST FLOOR PLAN

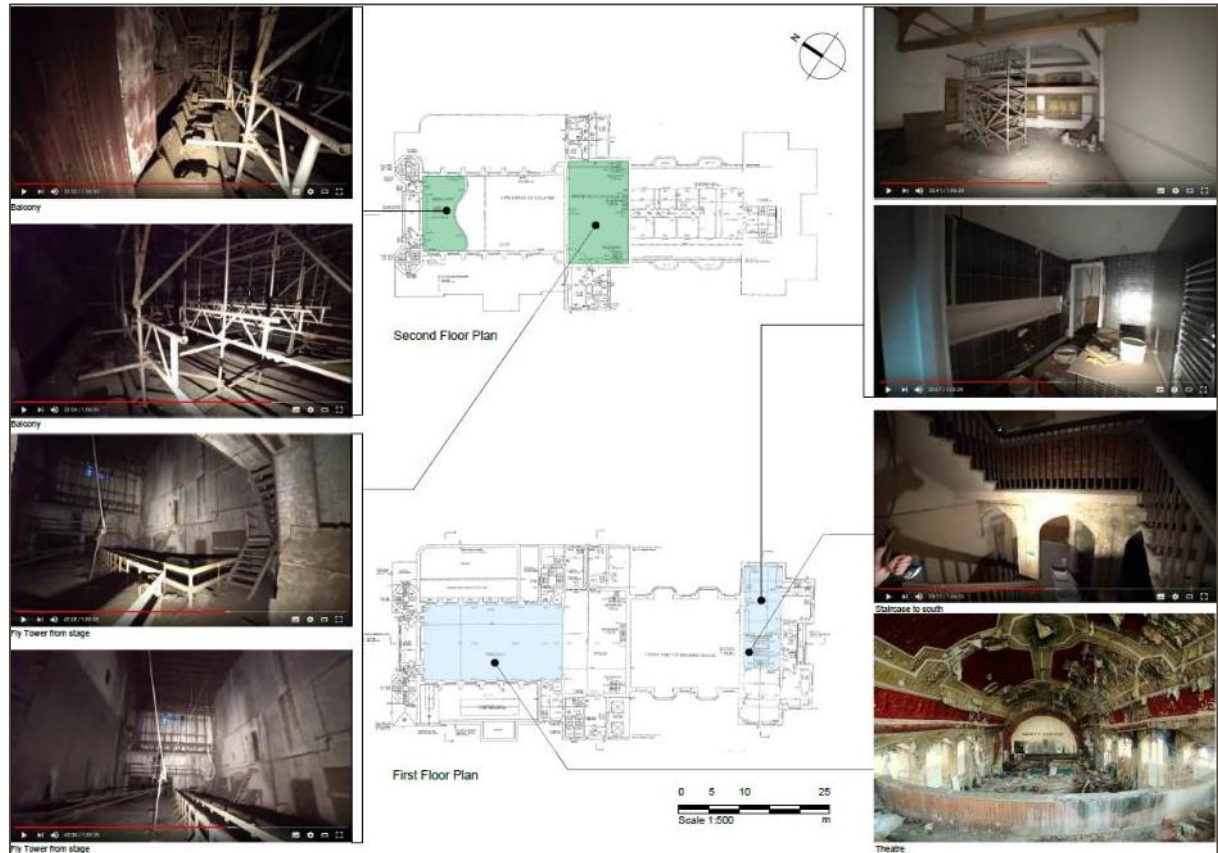
TOTAL CAPACITY: 511

6 Photo References from YouTube

6.1 Ground Floor



6.2 First and Second Floors



7 Strategic context

The Mechanics' Institute resides within the wider strategic context of Swindon, the Heritage Action Zone and the ambitions for the town centre. Figure 36 below summarises the key strategies and plans relating to these. Several themes that are potentially of relevance to the Mechanics' Institute emerge across these documents. They include:

- **Regional centre:** Swindon's asset base needs to more properly reflect the town's status as a regional centre, an important business location and a town with a growing population
- **Public realm and heritage:** The town centre in particular is under-performing and its weaknesses contribute to Swindon's poor public image. Improvements to the public realm (including its heritage) are necessary to improve the quality of the town-centre experience.
- **Leisure and culture:** Changes in the town need to benefit all Swindon citizens. As part of this, greater use of leisure and cultural facilities in the town should be encouraged by residents and visitors alike
- **Tertiary education:** There is a recognition that Swindon's education 'offer', especially the lack of HE provision, needs to be addressed
- **Engineering and manufacturing:** There is a desire to enhance the town's status as a hub of engineering and manufacturing technology
- **'Green' issues:** Swindon needs to be seen as more environmentally friendly and sustainable.

Figure 36: Summary of key strategic documents

Strategies	Summaries
Mechanics' Institution Trust 2016 report (prepared by Bearwood)	<p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ From this report's consultation with local authority officers and Elected Members, key local stakeholders, Trust members and potential funders it is clearly evident that a purely commercial use for the building would be both undesirable within the community, and not appropriate given the heritage of the site. ➤ There is a clear preference for the Mechanics' Institution Trust to take freehold ownership of the building, subject to securing funding for refurbishment and evidencing a financially sustainable future for the building. However, it is recognised that a long lease of suitable duration (minimum c.50 years) from Swindon Borough Council (or another owner) could be an alternative model.

Strategies	Summaries
Swindon Borough Council Plan 2016-2020	<p>Vision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ By 2030, Swindon will have all of the positive characteristics of a British city with one of the UK's most successful economies; a low-carbon environment with compelling cultural, retail and leisure opportunities and excellent infrastructure. It will be a model of well managed housing growth which supports and improves new and existing communities. ➤ Swindon will be physically transformed with existing heritage and landmarks complemented by new ones that people who live, work and visit here will recognise and admire. It will remain, at heart, a place of fairness and opportunity where people can aspire to and achieve prosperity, supported by strong civic and community leadership. <p>Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improve infrastructure and housing to support a growing, low-carbon economy. ➤ Offer education opportunities that lead to the right skills and the right jobs in the right places. ➤ Ensure clean and safe streets and improve our public spaces and local culture. ➤ Help people to help themselves while always protecting our most vulnerable children and adults.
Swindon Local Plan to 2026 (still at consultation stage)	<p>Identifies significant threats to economic success, particularly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ the poor performance of Swindon Town Centre, specifically in terms of the retail and office offer ➤ a lower level of higher-educational qualifications of residents compared to competing towns and cities ➤ the perceived poor image of Swindon ➤ a low retention of wealth within the Borough <p>The Spatial Vision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Borough of Swindon will become a place where people choose to live, visit and invest. As an important regional centre, Swindon's appeal will stem from having an attractive and well-equipped town that has successfully blended traditional architecture with high quality contemporary buildings that incorporate sustainable design and construction principles. ➤ The achievement of a high quality public realm in the heart of the town linked to the countryside will provide a real focal point for visitors and Swindonians alike. ➤ Swindon will become one of the best business locations in the UK, offering a high quality of life, not just to its residents, but also to those from a much wider catchment area. New jobs will be created and there will be the fullest range of employment opportunities for the whole community. ➤ Swindon will be at the centre of a network of multifunctional green spaces linking the town to the wider countryside. Swindon will have responded to the needs of a growing population in a way that has protected and enhanced our natural and historic environment. ➤ People in Swindon will have the opportunity to live active, healthy and learning lifestyles. <p>Leads to 10 strategic objectives, which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Education - to meet the need for education provision arising from the anticipated growth in population and to enable an improvement in skills and qualifications, particularly through the provision and support of tertiary education opportunities ➤ Culture and Leisure - to enable the provision of cultural and leisure facilities commensurate with Swindon's size and growth in population and realise Swindon's potential as a regional leisure destination. ➤ Natural, Built and Historic Environment - to ensure that development respects, enhances, and conserves the best of the existing built, historic and natural environment in the Borough

Strategies	Summaries
Central Area Action Plan (2009)	<p>Vision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ An area that has life and energy throughout the day and into the evening. An attractive, safe, healthy and accessible place that people choose for leisure, living, shopping and working. Where civic pride is strong and where its prosperity drives the region's economy. ➤ Remarks re Central Swindon (the location of the MI) ➤ The successful redevelopment of this area is crucial to linking together the development opportunities that exist either side of the railway line, upgrading the pedestrian and cycling routes and communications through the railway embankment and improving the attractiveness and legibility of the area to visitors to the town by rail. ➤ Whilst the Railway Village has managed to retain its character and identity, and functions as a self-contained community, it faces a number of challenges. Concerns over crime related activities, noise and pollution, appearance of neglect of the street scene and disruption caused by traffic passing through the area have been raised. ➤ Development proposals in the Railway Village must preserve the integrity of the Railway Village as a self-contained residential community and should recognise Emlyn Square as the focus of the Village. The provision of community facilities or uses that enhance the Village community will be actively supported at Emlyn Square. The Railway Village Community Centre will be protected for community use.
Swindon Heritage Strategy	<p>Vision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Swindon's heritage will be celebrated and enjoyed by local communities, visitors and businesses alike. It will stimulate pride in and respect for places within the Borough, and lead to improved quality of life, enhanced sustainable development, a growing visitor economy and greater opportunities for and deeper understanding through learning and participation. <p>Aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To create and promote an exciting, informative and accessible heritage offer for all. ➤ To establish a strong heritage sector in Swindon, developing and working in partnership. ➤ To develop a greater understanding of Swindon's Heritage, promoting its protection. <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop a plan for a united museums offer across the borough. ➤ Develop the town's reputation as a hub for heritage expertise with bodies such as Historic England and the National Trust. ➤ Develop partnerships between voluntary, public and business sectors to develop the action plan. ➤ Promote Swindon as a heritage destination. ➤ Increase understanding and awareness of Swindon's heritage for residents and visitors. ➤ Encourage the engagement of young people with Swindon's heritage through activities and partnerships with schools and youth organisations. ➤ Promote Swindon's heritage in development and regeneration. ➤ Create a deeper understanding of Swindon's heritage assets, their importance, issues and ways to respond. <p>Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I like where I live. ➤ We can all benefit from a growing economy and a better town centre. ➤ Everyone is enjoying sports, leisure and cultural opportunities. ➤ Living independently, protected from harm, leading healthy lives and making a positive contribution

Strategies	Summaries
Heritage Action Zone Delivery Plan (Jan 2019)	<p>Swindon Heritage Action Zone's objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To create and promote a coherent narrative of Swindon's railway history ➤ To identify, assess and secure tangible improvements to the physical condition of endangered heritage assets at risk. ➤ To co-ordinate the delivery of regeneration projects in a way that preserves and enhances Swindon's unique railway heritage and provides a sustainable legacy. ➤ To realise the potential of heritage assets to provide leisure, cultural and community amenities for the benefit of all ➤ To enable Swindon's historic railway area to be a thriving and connected central hub for the town ➤ To contribute to improving the health and wellbeing of residents in the HAZ area ➤ To build capacity within the community to take an active role in the future management of heritage assets ➤ To use the historic environment as a catalyst to support sustainable economic growth and the delivery of new homes.
Swindon's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017-2022	<p>Vision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Everyone in Swindon lives a healthy, safe, fulfilling and independent life and is supported by thriving and connected communities. <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Every child and young person in Swindon has a healthy start in life. ➤ Adults and older people in Swindon are living healthier and more independent lives. ➤ Improved health outcomes for disadvantaged and vulnerable communities (including adults with long term conditions, learning disabilities, physical disabilities or mental health problems, offenders). ➤ Improved mental health, wellbeing and resilience for all. ➤ Creation of sustainable environments in which communities can flourish.
An Economic Strategy for Swindon 2012-2026	<p>Vision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A confident place of economic growth and opportunity for all, with a distinctive role in the UK economy as an excellent business location and a centre for advanced engineering and innovative technology. <p>Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Create a Place of Opportunity for Young People ➤ Establish Swindon as a Regional Leisure Destination ➤ Create Low Carbon Swindon. ➤ Develop Swindon's Higher Education Provision. ➤ Position Swindon as a Hub of Engineering and Manufacturing Technology. ➤ Revitalise Swindon Town Centre. ➤ Establish Swindon as a Regional Leisure Destination ➤ Create Low Carbon Swindon
Swindon Town Centre Movement Strategy Draft (2019)	<p>Objectives of TCMS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Simplify Town Centre circulatory routes, and manage movements and access to parking ➤ Increase choice of travel options with priorities to pedestrian and cyclists ➤ Safe and convenient routes into, out of and through Central Swindon by all modes ➤ Improve quality of the experience in the town centre ➤ Improve air quality

8 Local Development Context

Figure 37 below illustrates the following significant projects taking place within the local development context:

- **North Star development by SevenCapital** – a major mixed-use development comprising a 500,000sqft of leisure, dining and retail and including: indoor real snow ski slopes; 14-screen IMAX cinema; 19 lane bowling alley; 24 retail and leisure units ranging from 900sqft to 6,200sqft; 27,000sqft Trampoline Park; The existing Oasis leisure centre; 130 bed hotel; 16,000sqft gym
- **Eastern Villages** – c.8,000 new residential dwellings
- **Kimmerfields** – new housing, office and retail (with the first phase in development providing new office space for Zurich)
- **Bus interchange** on Fleming Way
- **Cultural quarter** being planned to replace the Wyvern theatre together with the development of a new museum and art gallery, and a range of related arts and cultural facilities
- **Milton Road** – has experienced a number of significant office to residential conversions in recent years
- **Wichelstowe** – c.4,064 new residential dwellings
- **Heritage Action Zone** – launched in June 2019 (for which the Mechanics' Institute is the highest priority project)
- **Carriage Works** redevelopment with the first phase (The Workshed) open, RAU Swindon launching in spring 2020, further development coming on stream later in 2020 and subsequent phases being planned.

Figure 37. Local development context



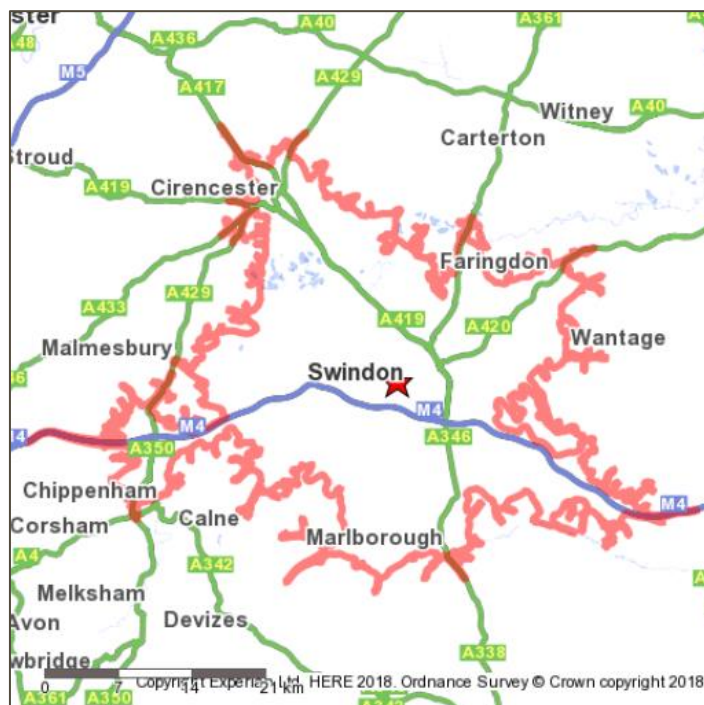
9 Local Population Demographics

The next section sets out an analysis of the local population demographics for three catchments centred on the Mechanics' Institute. Firstly, a review of the socio-demographic characteristics of a 30 minutes' drive-time catchment. Secondly, the local authority district. And finally, the two council wards that surround the Mechanics' Institute site namely, Central ward and Eastcotts ward.

9.1 30-minute drivetime area

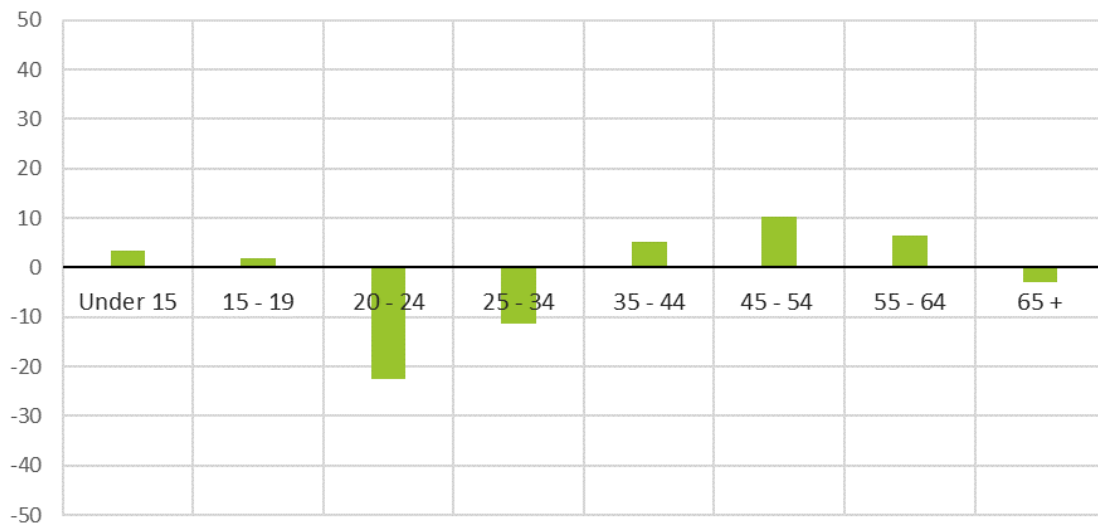
Swindon sits close to the borders of Wiltshire, Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire. Its 30-minute drivetime area extends deep into all three counties, stretching from Wantage and Faringdon in the east, Cirencester to the north, Malmesbury and Chippenham to the west, and Marlborough to the south. In all, some 360,000 people live in the drivetime area.

Figure 38: Map of 30-minute drivetime area



Compared with the national average, the area has slightly higher numbers of children and young people, but significantly fewer young adults, especially those aged 20-24 – reflecting in part its lack of higher education institutions. It has higher proportions of middle-aged people. The area is also disproportionately white by ethnicity: 92% of residents are white.

Figure 39: Age profile by band compared with national (England) average



Source: Fourth Street, based on Experian data

The drivetime area is relatively prosperous. The highest social grade, AB, is overrepresented locally by national standards, while the lowest, DE, is underrepresented. The area also has fewer students and more retired people than the national average.

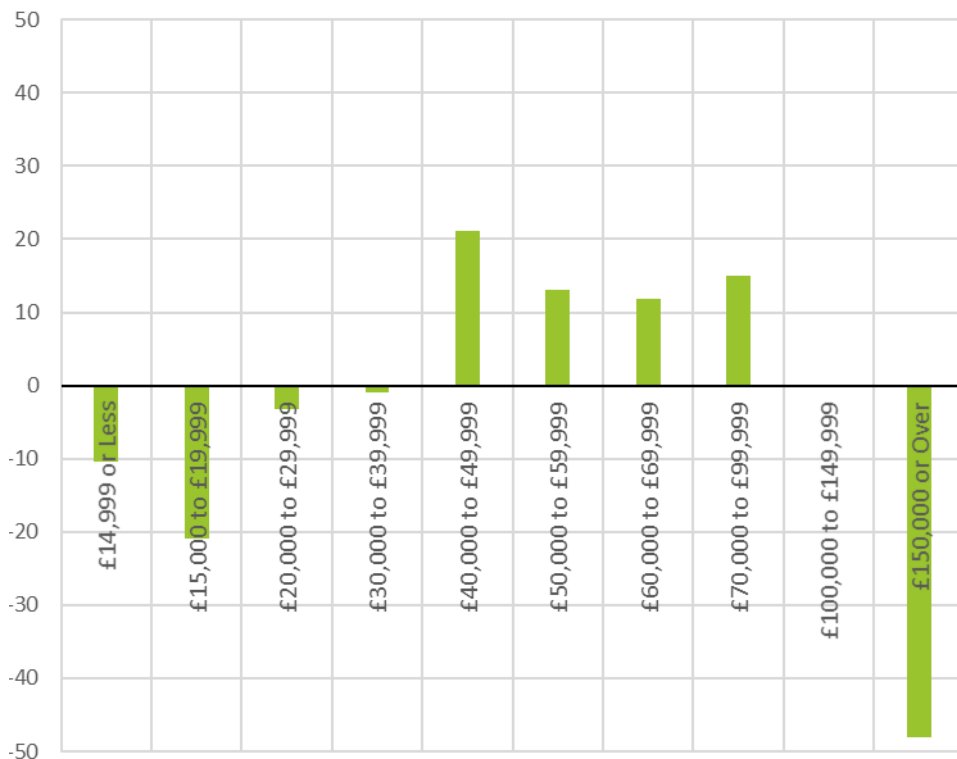
Figure 40: Social grade in drivetime area compared with national average



Source: Fourth Street, based on Experian data

Household incomes are generally somewhat above the national averages, though not hugely so (see Figure 41). Higher proportions of drivetime households have incomes from £40-100,000 than is typical for England, though the area has far fewer of the very highest earning households (over £150,000).

Figure 41: Household incomes in the drivetime area compared with the national average



Source: Fourth Street, based on Experian data

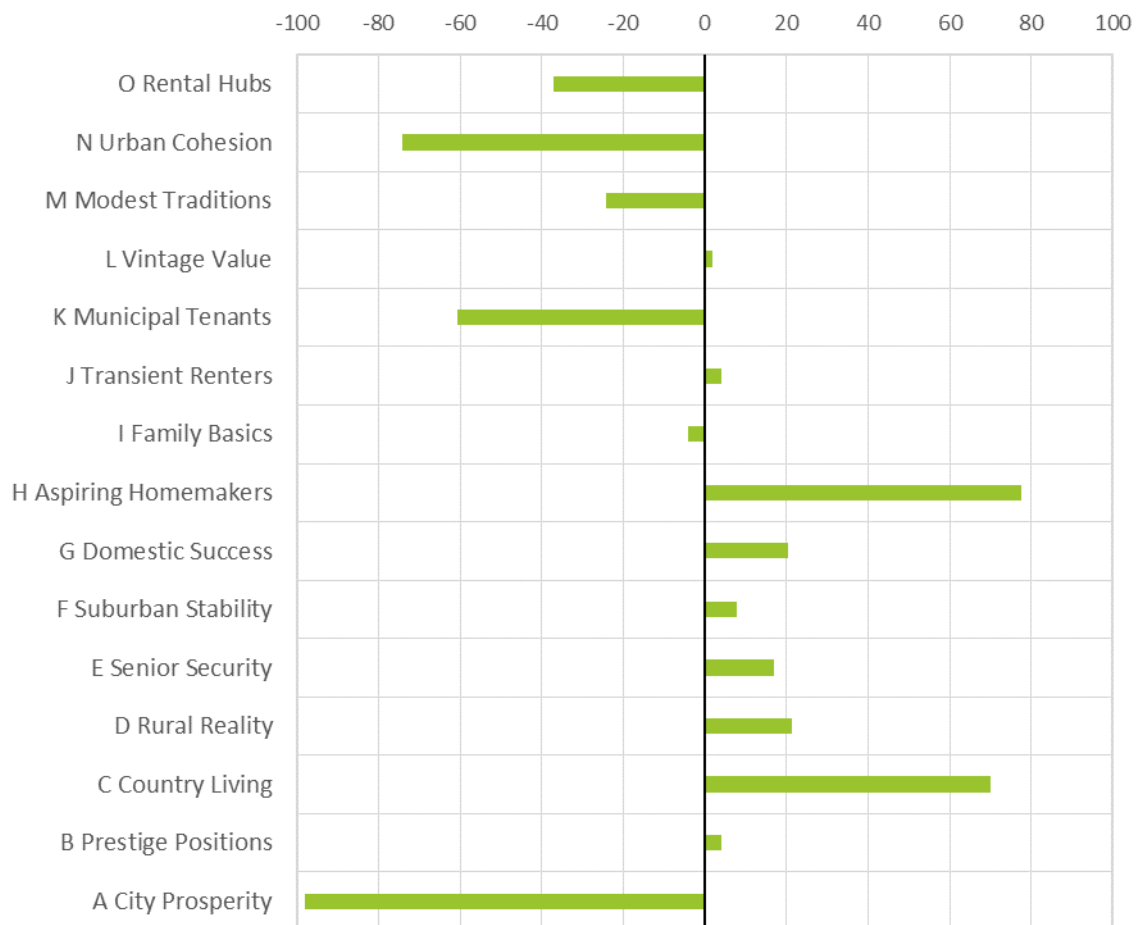
An analysis of Mosaic consumer sectors suggests that the drivetime area has especially high proportions of the Aspiring Homemakers and Country Living groups (Figure 42). Both of these are more than 60% as likely to be found locally as nationally. Aspiring Homemakers is also much the largest group in absolute terms, accounting for more than 63,000 people in the drivetime area.

Aspiring Homemakers: These tend to be younger households settling down in relatively affordable housing. People are typically in full-time employment but on starter salaries and living in suburban areas.

Country Living: These tend to be well-off home-owners in rural locations enjoying the benefits of country life. Typically, they have high rates of car ownership.

In addition to these two, Domestic Success and Family Basics also account for more than 30,000 people each in the drivetime area.

Figure 42: Mosaic categories' representation in Swindon drivetime area compared with national average

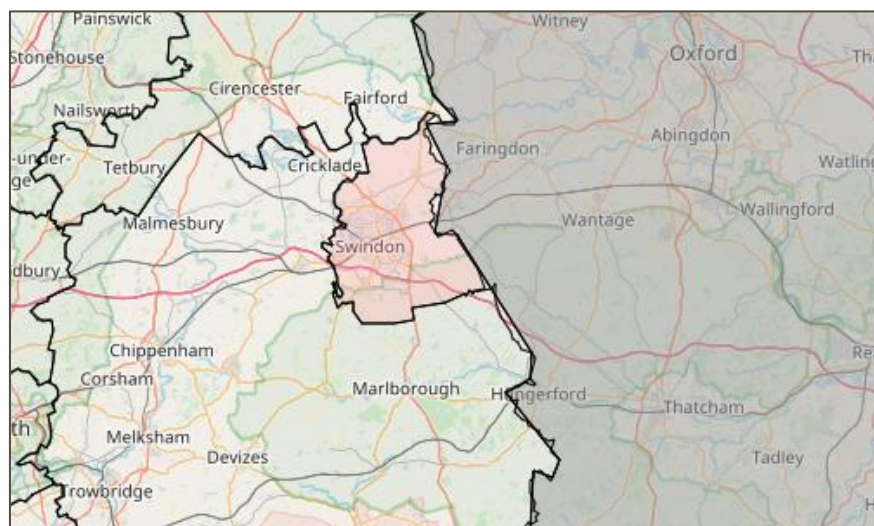


Source: Fourth Street, based on Experian data

9.2 Swindon local authority district

The borough of Swindon is home to around 222,000 people. The town of Swindon itself makes up much the largest share of the borough's population but the authority area also includes the market town of Highworth and the village of Wroughton, as well as a number of smaller settlements.

Figure 43: Swindon Local Authority (District)



9.2.1 Economic activity

Swindon residents are more likely to be economically active than is typical for Great Britain. Its economically inactive population are more likely to be long-term sick and disabled and less likely to be students than the national and regional averages.

Figure 44: Economic activity and inactivity rates (%)

	Swindon	South West	GB
Economic activity rate	82.0	81.9	78.9
Economic inactivity rate	18.0	18.1	21.1
Includes:			
Students	21.5	24.5	26.9
Long-term sick and disabled	25.7	22.3	23.0
Retired	15.7	16.2	12.9

Source: Nomisweb data

9.2.2 Occupations

The proportion of people in Swindon who work in managerial or professional occupations is lower than the average for both the South West and Great Britain. Swindon has above average proportions of people working as process plant and machine operatives or in elementary occupations.

Figure 45: Occupational groups (%)

Occupational groups	Swindon	South West	GB
Soc 2010 Major Group 1-3	41.5	46.0	47.1
1 Managers, Directors And Senior Officials	9.8	11.6	11.1
2 Professional Occupations	19.2	20.0	21.0
3 Associate Professional & Technical	12.2	14.3	14.8
Soc 2010 Major Group 4-5	20.1	21.5	19.9
4 Administrative & Secretarial	10.5	9.8	9.8
5 Skilled Trades Occupations	9.4	11.6	10.0
Soc 2010 Major Group 6-7	15.8	16.3	16.4
6 Caring, Leisure And Other Service Occupations	8.4	9.4	9.0
7 Sales And Customer Service Occs	7.2	6.8	7.3
Soc 2010 Major Group 8-9	22.6	16.2	16.6
8 Process Plant & Machine Operatives	9.2	5.8	6.3
9 Elementary Occupations	13.2	10.4	10.3

Source: Nomisweb data

9.2.3 Qualifications

Less than a third of people in Swindon have degree-level qualifications (NVQ4+) – a lower than average proportion compared with the Great Britain average. Almost 10% have 'other' qualifications, a category which includes apprenticeships, for example: a much higher percentage than nationally or regionally.

Figure 46: Qualification levels (%)

NVQ level	Swindon	South West	GB
NVQ4 And Above	32.2	38.7	39.3
NVQ3 And Above	49.4	60.6	57.8
NVQ2 And Above	68.3	78.6	74.9
NVQ1 And Above	82.4	89.4	85.4
Other Qualifications	9.7	5.3	6.8
No Qualifications	7.9	5.3	7.8

Source: Nomisweb data

9.2.4 Earnings

Full-time workers resident in Swindon earn close to the national average, and more than is typical for the South West (see Figure 47). Earnings by place of work are a little lower, suggesting that some Swindon workers are commuting out of the borough to find higher-paid work.

Figure 47: Earnings by place of residence and work (%)

	Swindon	South West	GB
Gross Weekly Wage by place of residence: Full time workers	£568.30	£537.60	£571.10
Gross Weekly Wage by place of work: Full time workers	£556.30	£531.20	£570.90

Source: Nomisweb data

9.2.5 Industrial sectors

Swindon's industrial structure (by employment) varies somewhat from Great Britain's as a whole. By national (and regional) standards Swindon has high proportions of people working in transportation and storage, and (especially) in finance and insurance. By contrast, it has low proportions working in construction, accommodation and food services activities, education, and health and social work.

Figure 48: Employee jobs by industry (%)

Employee jobs by industry	Swindon	South West	GB
Mining And Quarrying	0.0	0.1	0.2
Manufacturing	8.6	8.6	8.1
Electricity, Gas, Steam And Air Conditioning Supply	0.4	0.5	0.5
Water Supply; Sewerage, Waste Man't etc	1.5	0.9	0.7
Construction	3.4	5.4	4.7
Wholesale And Retail Trade; Repair Of Motor Vehicles etc	16.4	15.9	15.2
Transportation And Storage	7.8	4.0	4.8
Accommodation And Food Service Activities	6.0	9.8	7.6
Information And Communication	3.4	3.4	4.2
Financial And Insurance Activities	9.5	2.8	3.5
Real Estate Activities	1.1	1.8	1.7
Professional, Scientific And Technical Activities	7.8	7.2	8.7
Administrative And Support Service Activities	9.5	6.7	9.1
Public Administration And Defence etc.	3.4	4.4	4.3
Education	6.0	8.8	8.9
Human Health And Social Work Activities	10.3	14.9	13.2
Arts, Entertainment And Recreation	1.9	2.7	2.5
Other Service Activities	2.2	1.9	2.0

Source: Nomisweb data

9.2.6 Enterprises

Swindon has just over 7,500 enterprises in total. Although they are larger, on average, than is typical for enterprises in the South West, the vast majority of them are still micro-enterprises, employing fewer than ten people.

Figure 49: Enterprises by size band

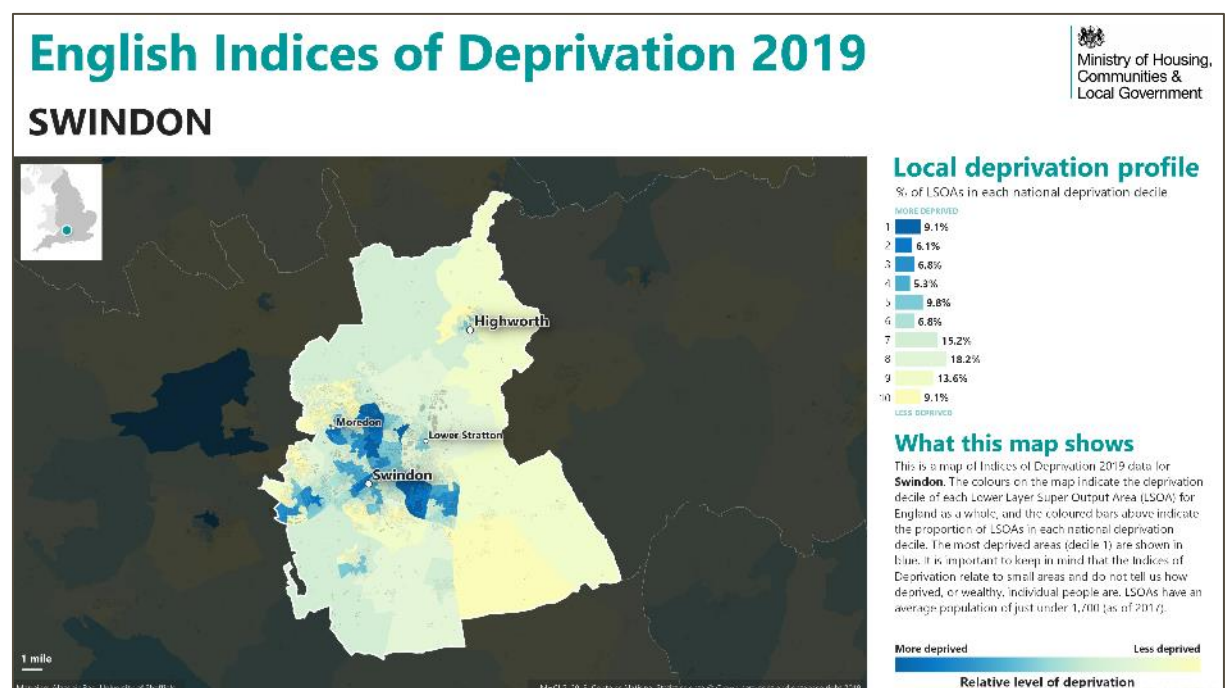
Enterprises	Swindon	South West
Micro (0 To 9)	82.5	89.1
Small (10 To 49)	13.5	9.1
Medium (50 To 249)	3.3	1.5
Large (250+)	0.8	0.3

Source: Nomisweb data

9.2.7 Deprivation

The most recent Indices of Deprivation for England, published in September 2019, suggest that the borough's most deprived areas lie within Swindon town (see Figure 50). The borough as a whole ranks as the 171st most deprived overall (out of 317). Within that ranking, Swindon scores relatively poorly for crime, where it ranks 88th, and education, skills and training where it ranks 115th. Its strengths are in the employment domain, where it ranks 193rd and 'living environment', where it is 238th.

Figure 50: Map of deprivation in the borough of Swindon



Source: MHCLG local deprivation profile

9.3 Central and Eastcott wards

We now look at the two council wards that lie closest to the Mechanics' Institute: Central and Eastcott wards.

Figure 51: Central and Eastcott Wards



The Central and Eastcott wards have a relatively youthful age profile, including higher proportions of people aged between 25-44 than the rest of Swindon or England.

Figure 52: Age profile of Central and Eastcott wards

	Number	% of Population	Index vs % of English pop.
Age 0 to 4	14,100	6.7%	108
Age 5 to 7	7,600	3.6%	105
Age 8 to 9	4,700	2.2%	104
Age 10 to 14	12,400	5.9%	102
Age 15	2,600	1.2%	101
Age 16 to 17	5,100	2.4%	98
Age 18 to 19	4,700	2.2%	87
Age 20 to 24	12,900	6.2%	91
Age 25 to 29	15,100	7.2%	105
Age 30 to 44	48,300	23.1%	112
Age 45 to 59	41,800	20.0%	103
Age 60 to 64	11,000	5.3%	88
Age 65 to 74	15,200	7.3%	85
Age 75 to 84	9,900	4.7%	86
Age 85 to 89	2,600	1.2%	85
Age 90 and over	1,200	0.6%	75

There are also proportionately more people who are semi-skilled and unskilled (DE grade) in the two wards than in the rest of Swindon. However, the two wards also have roughly the same proportion of people classed as AB social grade as the rest of Swindon (Figure 53).

Figure 53: Social grade profile of Central and Eastcotts ward

	Number	% of Population	Index vs % of Swindon pop.	Index vs % of England pop.
AB: Higher and intermediate managerial/ admin/ professional	3,500	21.5%	99	94
C1: Supervisory, clerical, jr managerial/ admin/ professional	4,400	27.0%	93	89
C2: Skilled manual occupations	3,000	18.4%	80	84
DE Semi-skilled and unskilled manual occupations, unemployed and lowest grade occupations	5,400	33.1%	126	134

Perhaps surprisingly, given the social grade data, the two wards have a higher proportion of people with university degree level education and other vocational/ work-related qualifications relative to the rest of Swindon, and fewer with no qualifications.

Figure 54: Educational profile of Central and Eastcott wards

Level of Education	Number	% of Population	Index vs % of Swindon pop.	Index vs % of England pop.
No Qualifications	3,000	16.2%	79	72
Level 1 (GCSE D-G)	2,900	15.7%	90	118
Level 2 (GCSE A*-C)	2,800	15.1%	87	99
Apprenticeship	600	3.2%	72	91
Level 3 (AS & A level)	2,000	10.8%	93	88
Level 4 and above (BAs, BScs etc.)	4,900	26.5%	117	97
Other Qualifications	2,300	12.4%	213	217

9.4 Cultural and heritage participation data

There are two sources of national data that are useful to a market analysis for a heritage- or culture-based visitor experience – the *Taking Part* and the *Active Lives* surveys.

The *Taking Part* survey, run by the DCMS, examines the participation patterns at a regional level of both adults and children in a range of cultural activities. It provides breakdowns by gender, age, ethnicity, and regions of England. It analyses two categories of relevance for this work: Engagement with/ attendance at the Arts, and Heritage. Among its findings for the South West of England are the following:

Arts Engagement/ attendance:

- The large majority of people in all age groups engaged with the arts at least once in 2018/19. The rate was highest among 25-44 year olds and lowest among those people who were 75 or over.

- More affluent socio-economic groups as much more likely to engage than poorer ones
- The South West has the second-highest engagement rate among English regions (85%), behind only the East of England.
- White and mixed-race people were more likely to engage with the arts than black or Asian people
- The main barriers cited for non-engagement were a 'lack of time' and a 'lack of interest'.

Heritage:

- Heritage is popular with all adult age groups, but attendance is highest among 65-74 year olds
- There is a correlation between levels of affluence and educational attainment and people's propensity to visit heritage
- The South West had a higher than average attendance level: in 2018/19 more than 80% of adults in the South West visited a heritage site, compared with 72% for England as a whole
- The primary barriers cited for non-attendance were a 'lack of time' and a 'lack of interest'.

The *Active Lives* survey provides a second source of evidence on engagement with the arts (it does not collect data related to attendance at heritage attractions).

It uses a different methodology from the *Taking Part* survey, but it is sufficiently large that it can provide information at local authority level. It measures arts participation (doing creative, artistic, theatrical or music activity or a craft) and attendance at arts events (attending an event, performance or festival involving creative, artistic, dance, theatrical or music activity), including the frequency of visits.

The overall percentage of people in Swindon who attended arts events (per year) in the period from Nov 2015 to May 2017 was 47.1%, below the average for England of 52.2%. This compares with rates of 59.5% in Wiltshire, 63.4% in Bristol and 48.9% in Gloucester. In fact, Swindon's arts attendance rate was the lowest of any South West local authority.

The pattern for arts participation was similar: Swindon's rate is lower than the national average and the three comparators. Among South West local authorities, only Torbay has a (fractionally) lower rate.

Figure 55: Percentage of adults involved in these activities

	England	Swindon	Wiltshire	Bristol	Gloucester
Arts participation	34.7	32.4	37.8	46.1	35.1
Arts attendance	52.2	47.1	59.5	63.4	48.9

Source: Active Lives survey

Even those Swindon residents who attend or participate in the arts tend to do so less frequently than people from the comparator authorities, as the figures below show.

Figure 56: Frequency of arts participation (% of adults)

	England	Swindon	Wiltshire	Bristol	Gloucester
Three or more	27.3	25.6	29.5	38.5	27.4
Two	3.5	3.9	4.2	3.7	3.7
Once	3.5	2.6	3.6	3.5	4.0
None	65.7	68.0	62.6	54.2	64.9

Source: Active Lives survey

Figure 57: Frequency of attendance at arts events (% of adults)

	England	Swindon	Wiltshire	Bristol	Gloucester
Three or more	26.6	19.3	25.5	38.9	18.7
Two	12.8	12.8	16.2	12.8	13.3
Once	12.4	14.4	17.5	11.4	16.5
None	48.2	53.4	40.7	36.9	51.6

Source: Active Lives survey

9.5 Conclusions

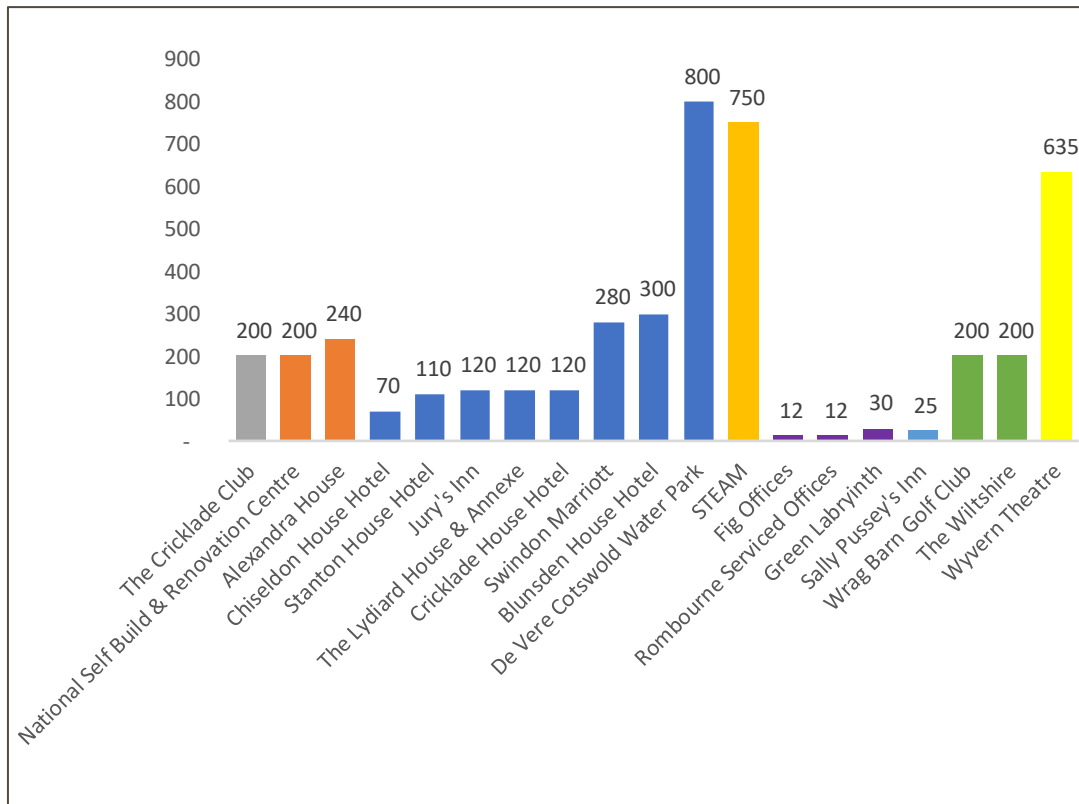
The Mechanics' Institute's 30-minute drivetime area is relatively prosperous, including as it does many successful rural communities and small towns. The borough of Swindon itself is somewhat less affluent than its surrounds, though some of this may be accounted for by its relatively youthful population. What deprivation there is in the borough is largely concentrated in the town of Swindon itself. However, Swindon's rates of arts participation and attendance are among the lowest in the South West.

The wards closest to the Mechanics' Institute, Central and Eastcott, present a mixed picture. Although there is a high concentration of manual and unskilled workers in the wards, there are also many people with degrees. This mixture may reflect changing patterns of settlement. Although the area has traditionally been dominated by social housing for working-class people, the heritage of the area and its central location may be attracting some younger professionals too as the area continues to change and regenerate.

10 Venues in Swindon

Figure 58 below illustrates the maximum marketed capacities for venues across Swindon. Colours denoted different types of venue.

Figure 58. Venues in Swindon

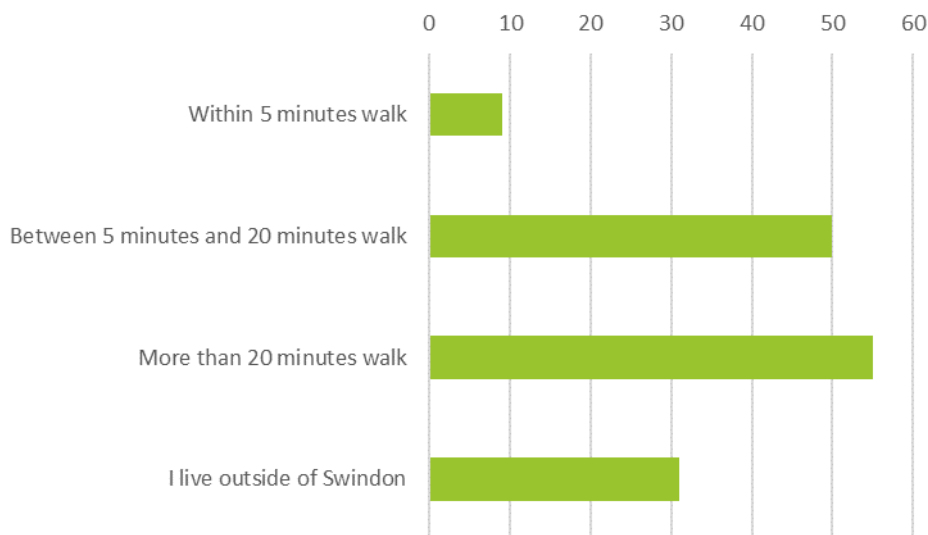


11 Survey Results

This appendix discusses the online survey conducted to explore attitudes towards the Mechanics' Institute. In all, 145 responses were received. The large majority of these arrived within a few days of either the launch of the survey at a public meeting in Swindon on 14 October 2019 or a meeting with National Trust staff on 25 November 2019. Although the survey avoided collecting details of names and addresses (including email addresses) in order to comply with GDPR's data protection requirements, it seems reasonable to assume that most of those who filled in the survey attended one of those two meetings. It cannot therefore be regarded as a wholly representative sample of the population of Swindon, although the demographics of respondents do not appear to be hugely different from the wider population. On the other hand, those filling it in are likely to be interested in, and well-informed about, the Mechanics' Institute.

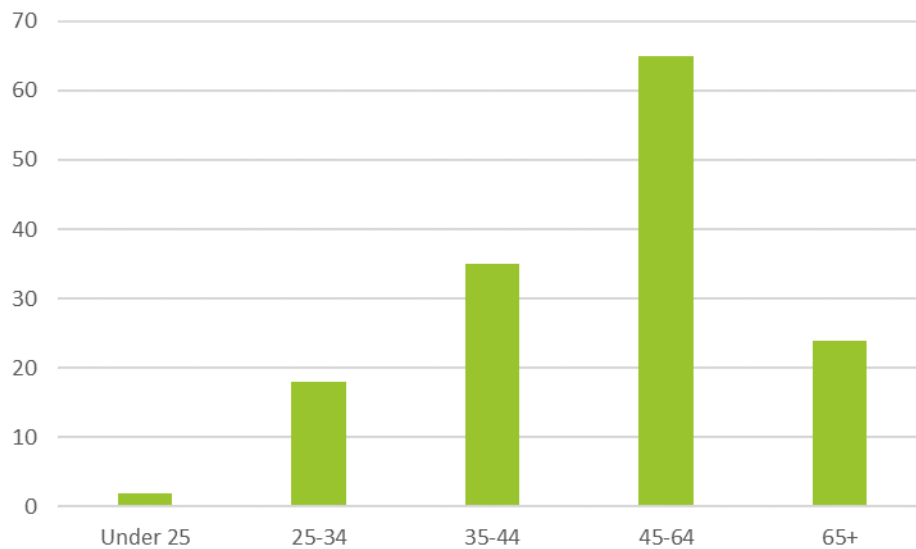
Just over 40% of respondents lived within 20 minutes' walk of the Mechanics' Institute.

Figure 59: How far is the Mechanics' Institute from where you live? (No. of responses)



Around 45% of the respondents fell into the 45-64 age bracket. Although there were people in all the age categories, only 20 were under 35.

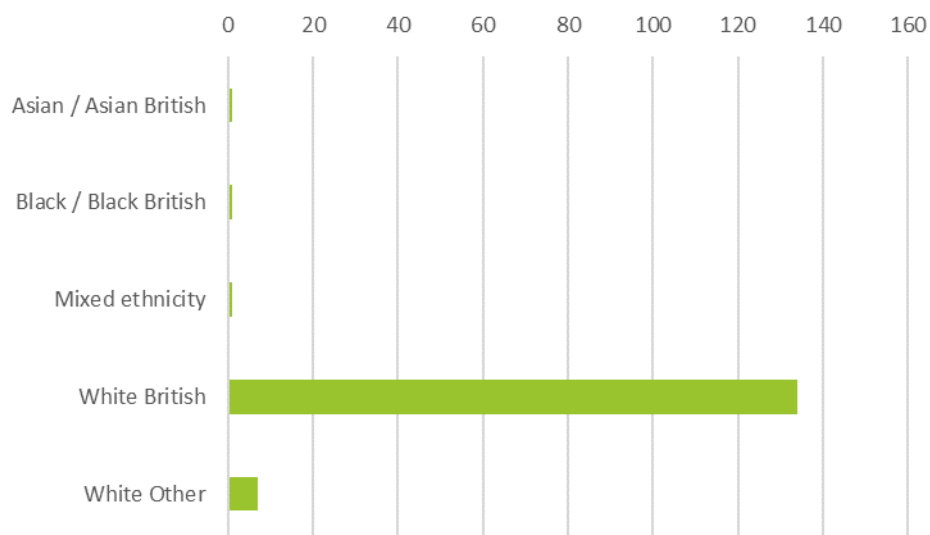
Figure 60: How old are you? (No. of responses)



Of those who answered the gender question, 75 were male and 65 female.

The vast majority of respondents classed themselves as white British by ethnicity.

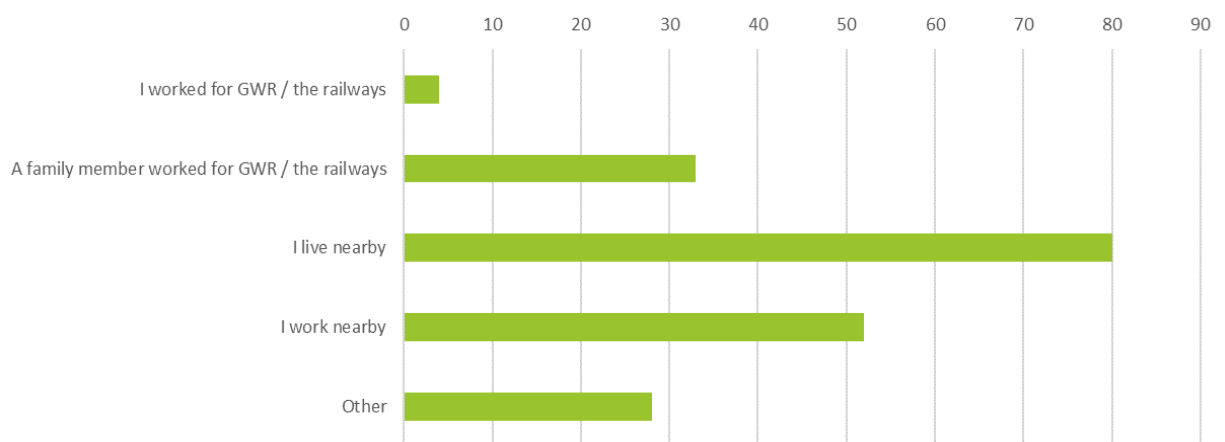
Figure 61: How would you describe your ethnicity? (No. of responses)



Mechanics' Institute Viability Assessment

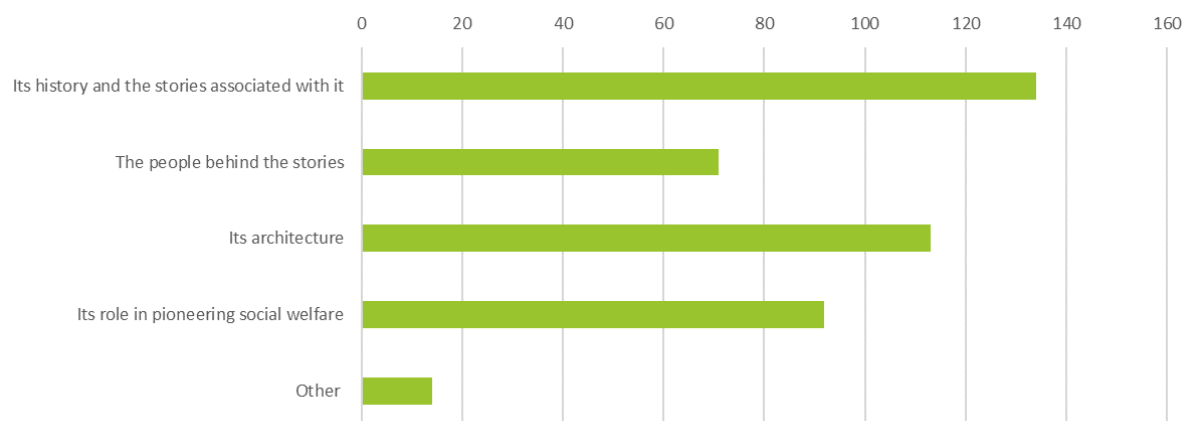
When asked about their connection to the Institute, more than half of those who responded said they lived near it. Note that some people ticked more than one box here or added a comment in 'other' to supplement their main answer. Several of those who answered 'other' said they had lived in Swindon previously and retained an attachment to the town.

Figure 62: What is your connection to the Mechanics' Institute in Swindon? (No. of responses)



As Figure 63 shows, respondents were most interested in the history of the building and its architecture rather than, for example, the 'people behind the stories'. (Multiple responses were allowed here.)

Figure 63: Of the following, what interests you about the Mechanics' Institute? (tick as many as apply)

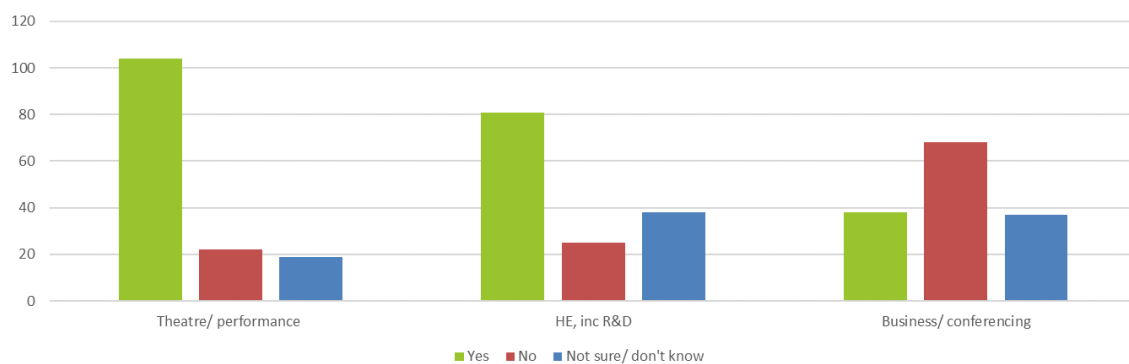


There have been three principal uses put forward for the Institute: theatre/ performance/arts space, higher education uses (including R&D), and business/ conferencing. The majority of respondents felt that Swindon lacked the first two of these, with the largest majority thinking theatre/ performance/arts space was in short supply. Higher education uses ranked second. Respondents were split over the need for more business/conferencing space.

Mechanics' Institute Viability Assessment

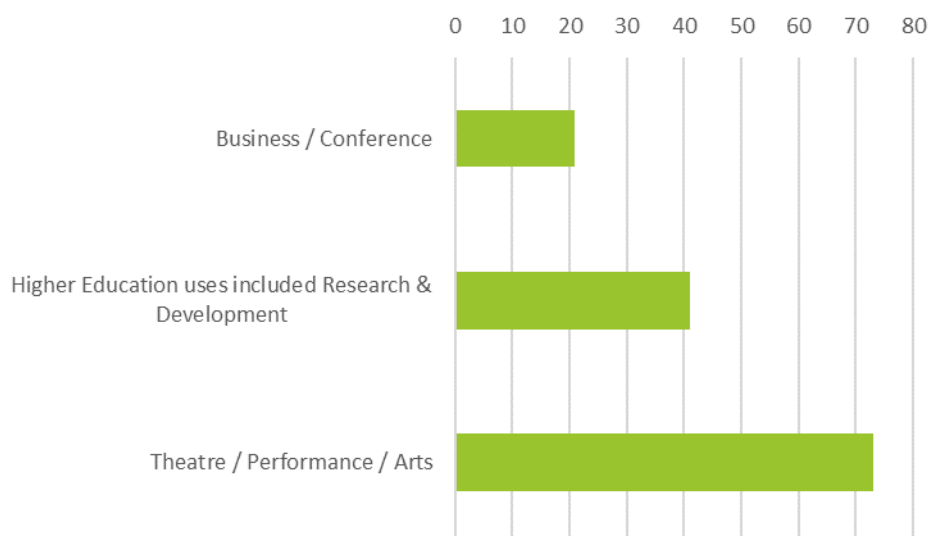
Respondents were also given the chance to offer thoughts on other community uses for the Institute: replies here often mentioned reviving previous uses of the building in modern form, such as a theatre/concert hall or a library, but also suggested meeting places/rooms for community and voluntary groups, an art gallery (e.g. for Swindon's municipal art collection), a café, or museum/history displays.

Figure 64: The Mechanics' Institution Trust has short-listed three principal future uses for the Mechanics' Institute building, which are now being assessed. They are: Theatre / Performance / Arts- Higher Education use, business/ conferencing. From your knowledge of Swindon, is the town short of these facilities? (No. of responses)



Respondents were also asked which of the three main uses did they think was most viable in the context of the Institute. Theatre/performance/arts was the preferred option here as well.

Figure 65: Which of these uses do you think would be the most viable? (No. of responses)



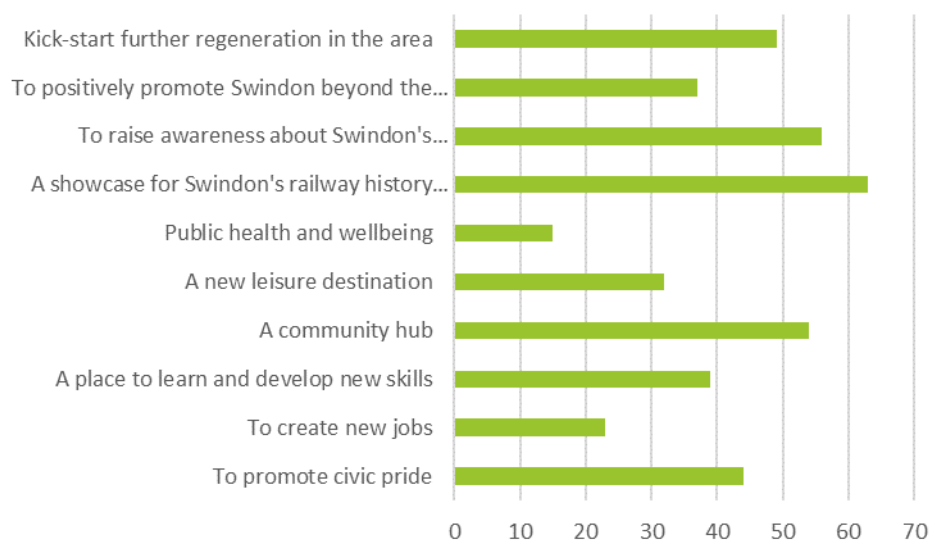
The top priority for respondents when asked what was most important to them (out of a range of options) was to get the Institute off the Heritage at Risk register. After this, having public access to at least some parts of the building was seen as most important, followed by community involvement in its governance.

Figure 66: How important are the following to you? (No. of responses)

	Extremely important	Very important	Somewhat important	Not so important	Not at all important
Community ownership of the building	42	38	32	23	10
Community involvement in the governance of the building	53	47	23	17	5
Community involvement in the day-to-day management of the building	23	39	41	35	6
Having public access to all areas of the building	26	44	51	17	7
Having public access to parts of the building	59	57	18	7	3
Removing the building from Historic England's Heritage at Risk register	91	26	11	3	11
The building should not require ongoing financial subsidy	21	31	56	23	12

The greatest contribution the Institute could make in future was thought to lie in showcasing and raising awareness of the history and heritage of Swindon and the railways. This was followed by its potential value as a hub for the community.

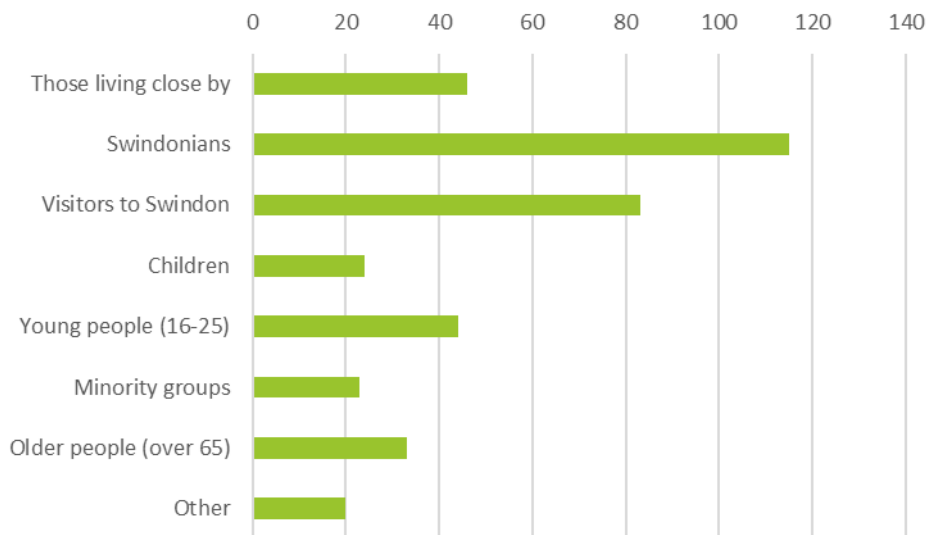
Figure 67: Looking ahead, where do you think the most valuable future contributions of the Mechanics' Institute could lie? (choose up to 3)



While there was a strong emphasis on the need for the building to serve the community, that term was widely regarded as meaning all Swindonians rather than any particular group, or indeed residents living in

the immediate vicinity. ('Other' responses were generally variants on 'the Institute should be for everyone'.) More than half, though, thought it should try to appeal to visitors to Swindon too.

Figure 68: Are there particular groups the restored Mechanics' Institute should aim to serve? (multiple responses allowed)



Finally, respondents were given the chance to make any further comments they wished about the ideas for the Mechanics' Institute. While these remarks ranged over a number of areas, one recurring theme was the desire to just get something done with the building – there was a strong sense that it has been allowed to degenerate for too long.

12 Detailed Capital Costs Plan

The estimated costs are based on the assumptions stated earlier, as interpreted by the quantity surveyor. There is significant scope for these assumptions to be varied and for estimated costs to vary as a result. RICS guidance suggests that at Order of Cost stage, estimated costs should be based on similar works on comparative buildings elsewhere but the Mechanics' Institute is a unique building and so data for comparator buildings/projects is not readily available. For this reason, the estimate is based on approximate quantities using rates and prices from a range of other projects with similar characteristics. The estimates assume that the majority of spaces within the building are sufficiently upgraded to be accessible and DDA compliant.

12.1 Estimate Detail

Item	Quantity	Rate (£)	Amount	Section Totals
Roof				
Scaffolding and temporary roof				
scaffolding to perimeters; debris netting	2920 m2	95.00	277,400.00	
temporary roof	2850 m2	115.00	327,750.00	
extra scaffolding to turrets	3 Nr	10,000.00	30,000.00	
hoist	2 Nr	12,000.00	24,000.00	
security, lightning arrest, fire alarm	1 Item	20,000.00	20,000.00	
temporary drainage	1 Item	10,000.00	10,000.00	
Stripping existing coverings				
pitched slated areas and leadwork	1396 m2	25.00	34,900.00	
pitched felted and battened areas	811 m2	15.00	12,165.00	
flat felted areas	617 m2	20.00	12,340.00	
Stripping decking	617 m2	20.00	12,340.00	
Allowance for timber repairs and new structures where rotten	1 Item	100,000.00	100,000.00	
New Welsh slate coverings; allowing for boundary work, leadwork, lead gutters; sundry works	2207 m2	500.00	1,103,500.00	
New lead roof coverings to flat roof areas; allowing for boundary work, rolls, gutters, outlets, parapet cappings and sundry works	617 m2	800.00	493,600.00	
Allowance for works to cast iron rainwater goods	1 Item	50,000.00	50,000.00	
Repairs/decorations to dormer windows	10 Nr	1,000.00	10,000.00	
Allowance for sundry work to turrets, finials, vents, etc	1 Item	25,000.00	25,000.00	
Allowance for works to rear of parapet walls	1 Item	25,000.00	25,000.00	
Thermal insulation; wood fibre sarking above/quilt between	2824 m2	100.00	282,400.00	
Sub-total Roof			2,850,395	2,850,400
External Walls				
Allowance for cleaning, patch repointing, stone repair	2620 m2	150.00	393,000.00	
Allowance for internal wall insulation; wood fibre board and lime	2620 m2	175.00	458,500.00	
Sub-total External Walls			851,500	851,500
External Doors and Windows				
Allowance for replacement metal lights	644 Nr	1,250.00	805,000.00	
Allowance for secondary glazing; say 50% of wall area	1310 m2	600.00	786,000.00	
Allowance for repair and redecoration of external doors	11 Nr	2,000.00	22,000.00	
Allowance for powered doors	4 Nr	5,000.00	20,000.00	
Sub-total External Doors and Windows			1,633,000	1,633,000
Stripping out				
Allowance for asbestos removal	1 Item	100,000.00	100,000.00	
Allowance for clearing pigeon guano	1 Item	25,000.00	25,000.00	
Removing scaffolding/temporray supports	1 Item	25,000.00	25,000.00	
Going through the building to remove accumulated debris, finishes, secondary fixtures and fittings, rotten floors and joinery - 12 operatives x 2 months + 200Nr skips	1 Item	188,704.00	188,704.00	
Sub-total Stripping Out			338,704	338,700

Mechanics' Institute Viability Assessment

Item	Quantity	Rate (£)	Amount	Section Totals
Finishing and Fitting Out - Basement				
Pumping out groundwater	1 Item	2,500.00	2,500.00	
Tanking	159 m2	200.00	31,800.00	
Work to doors	1 Item	12,000.00	12,000.00	
Work to steps, gantries, railings	1 Item	10,000.00	10,000.00	
General finishing and decorating	159 m2	30.00	4,770.00	
Sub-total Basement			61,070	61,100
Finishing and Fitting out - WC Provision				
Ground floor - G11 part	68 m2	1,840	125,120.00	
First floor - F6 and part F8, F9	46 m2	1,840	84,640.00	
Second floor - S5, S7, S8, S9	23 m2	1,840	42,320.00	
Sub-total WC Provision			252,080	252,100
Finishing and Fitting out - Circulation areas				
Ground floor				
ST1, G4, G5	18 m2	636	11,446.03	
ST2, G21, G22	18 m2	636	11,446.03	
G34-41	73 m2	636	46,420.00	
ST3, G31, G27	20 m2	636	12,717.81	
First floor				
ST2, F3	16 m2	636	10,174.25	
F2	17 m2	636	10,810.14	
ST1, F1	17 m2	636	10,810.14	
ST4, F8(part)	37 m2	636	23,527.95	
ST3, F7	40 m2	636	25,435.62	
ST5a, ST5b, F14, F13, F12	68 m2	636	43,240.55	
Second floor				
ST2, S3	16 m2	636	10,174.25	
S2	17 m2	636	10,810.14	
ST1, S1	17 m2	636	10,810.14	
S10, S11, S12, S13	24 m2	636	15,261.37	
S6	21 m2	636	13,353.70	
ST5	37 m2	636	23,527.95	
New lifts; including structural alterations	3 Nr	100,000	300,000.00	
Sub-total Circulation			589,966	590,000
Finishing and Fitting out - Storage				
Ground floor				
G40, G41	38 m2	352	13,359.86	
G25, G26, G28, G29, G30	46 m2	352	16,172.47	
First floor				
F5 (part), ST6, ST7, ST8 (double height space)	53 m2	703	37,266.99	
Allow extra for repairs to metal staircases	3 Nr	5,000	15,000.00	
F9(part)	11 m2	352	3,867.33	
Second floor				
S14	20 m2	352	7,031.51	
Sub-total Storage			92,698	92,700

Mechanics' Institute Viability Assessment

Item	Quantity	Rate (£)	Amount	Section Totals
Finishing and Fitting out - Business Units				
Ground floor				
G47	102 m2	372	37,905.90	
G44, G43	83 m2	372	30,845.00	
First floor				
F10, F11	82 m2	372	30,473.37	
F15	102 Nr	372	37,905.90	
Second floor				
S15-S23	153 m2	372	56,858.86	
Sub-total Business Units			193,989	194,000
Offices/ Meeting Rooms (G2-10)				
Demolitions				
One brick thick walls	36 m2	50.00	1,800.00	
Floors				
epoxy screed	187 m2	15.00	2,805.00	
carpet tiles	187 m2	50.00	9,350.00	
skirtings; 225mm high painted	76 m	35.00	2,660.00	
Walls				
Refurbish timber glazed partitions	63 m2	200.00	12,600.00	
Soundproofing/fireproofing glazed screens	63 m2	150.00	9,450.00	
Allowance for new stud partitions	1 Item	5,000.00	5,000.00	
Fire resisting glazed screens along G7-G9, G2-12	54 m2	1,750.00	94,500.00	
making good plaster; skim finish	228 m2	40.00	9,120.00	
Ceilings				
suspended ceiling; MR plasterboard and skim	187 m2	50.00	9,350.00	
Internal doors				
new	1 Nr	1,750.00	1,750.00	
Fittings				
Reception desk	1 Item	15,000.00	15,000.00	
Decorations	187 m2	40.00	7,480.00	
Sub-total offices/meeting rooms			180,865	180,900
Café/Bar/Kitchen				
Demolitions				
One brick thick walls	96 m2	50.00	4,800.00	
Forming new doorways into kitchen	2 Nr	1,000.00	2,000.00	
Floors				
epoxy screed	87 m2	15.00	1,305.00	
Parquet flooring	51 m2	150.00	7,650.00	
resin floor to kitchen	87 m2	100.00	8,700.00	
skirtings; 225mm high painted	38 m	35.00	1,330.00	
Walls				
metal studwork partitions; plywood, MR plasterboard, skim	23 m2	135.00	3,105.00	
making good plaster; skim finish	152 m2	40.00	6,080.00	
tiling to walls in kitchen/store	197 m2	100.00	19,700.00	
Ceilings				
suspended ceiling; MR plasterboard and skim	138 m2	50.00	6,900.00	
Internal doors				
new	4 Nr	1,750.00	7,000.00	
Fittings				
Kitchen fit out including fire-proof duct extract and cold rooms	1 Item	225,000.00	225,000.00	
Bar fit out	1 Item	50,000.00	50,000.00	
Decorations	87 m2	40.00	3,480.00	
Sub-total café/bar/kitchen			347,050	347,100

Mechanics' Institute Viability Assessment

Item	Quantity	Rate (£)	Amount	Section Totals
Entrance/Main Lobby/ Cloaks				
Demolitions/alterations to existing				
One brick thick walls	100 m2	50.00	5,000.00	
forming double door opening G1/G13	1 Item	2,000.00	2,000.00	
Blocking opening G1/G2	1 Item	500.00	500.00	
Floors				
refurbishing/piecing in Minton tiling in G1	17 m2	400.00	6,800.00	
epoxy screed in G13,14,32,33, cloaks	192 m2	15.00	2,880.00	
Parquet flooring	192 m2	150.00	28,800.00	
skirtings; 225mm high painted	83 m	35.00	2,905.00	
Walls				
making good plaster; skim finish	332 m2	40.00	13,280.00	
Ceilings				
suspended ceiling; MR plasterboard and skim	209 m2	50.00	10,450.00	
Cornices	100 m	75.00	7,500.00	
Internal doors				
new single	2 Nr	1,750.00	3,500.00	
new double, entrance: feature doors; powered	1 Item	10,000.00	10,000.00	
Fittings				
Reception desk	1 Item	25,000.00	25,000.00	
Cloaks desk and hangers	1 Item	10,000.00	10,000.00	
Platform lift at G23; alterations to floor structures	1 Item	25,000.00	25,000.00	
Decorations	192 m2	40.00	7,680.00	
Sub-total Entrance/Main Lobby			161,295	161,300
Reading Room (G48)				
Demolitions/alterations				
Forming opening to external areas; toothed stone quoins; new doors	2 Nr	10,000.00	20,000.00	
ramped access to G24 corridor	1 Item	5,000.00	5,000.00	
Floors				
epoxy screed in G13,14,32,33	294 m2	15.00	4,410.00	
Parquet flooring	294 m2	150.00	44,100.00	
skirtings; 225mm high painted	68 m	35.00	2,380.00	
Walls				
making good plaster; skim finish	278 m2	40.00	11,120.00	
making good wall panelling; incl taking off/refixing to allow wall insulation	198 m2	180.00	35,640.00	
Ceilings				
Reinstating barrel vaulted ceiling in modern materials - fibrous plaster ribs/panels on plasterboard on metal framework	368 m2	400.00	147,200.00	
birdcage scaffolding	294 m2	95.00	27,930.00	
Internal doors				
refurbish double doors	2 Nr	1,500.00	3,000.00	
Fittings				
AV equipment	1 Item	50,000.00	50,000.00	
Decorations	294 m2	80.00	23,520.00	
Sub-total Reading Room			374,300	374,300

Mechanics' Institute Viability Assessment

Item	Quantity	Rate (£)	Amount	Section Totals
Lecture Rooms (G24, incl corridor)				
Floors				
acoustic floor: acoustic plywood on resilient layer	190 m2	66.00	12,540.00	
carpet tiles	190 m2	50.00	9,500.00	
skirtings; 225mm high painted	58 m	35.00	2,030.00	
Walls				
making good plaster; skim finish	290 m2	40.00	11,600.00	
acoustic linings to walls	290 m2	80.00	23,200.00	
acoustic partitioning along corridor	100 m2	200.00	20,000.00	
Extra over for acoustic sliding/folding screens	24 m2	1,000.00	24,000.00	
Ceilings				
False ceiling in steel and timber; acoustic finishes/insulation	190 m2	150.00	28,500.00	
Internal doors				
new single; acoustic	4 Nr	2,500.00	10,000.00	
Fittings				
Fixed raked seating	84 Nr	500.00	42,000.00	
AV equipment	1 Item	100,000.00	100,000.00	
Decorations	190 m2	60.00	11,400.00	
Sub-total Lecture rooms			294,770	294,800
Auditorium and Stage (F4, F5)				
Floors				
Take up floorboards; dispose	430 m2	15.00	6,450.00	
Structural repairs to floors	430 m2	100.00	43,000.00	
Acoustic plywood deck on resilient layer; insulation between joists	430 m2	85.00	36,550.00	
Engineered oak boarding	430 m2	140.00	60,200.00	
Crash deck beneath floor	430 m2	95.00	40,850.00	
skirtings; 225mm high painted	106 m	35.00	3,710.00	
Walls				
making good plaster; skim finish	742 m2	40.00	29,680.00	
Metal studwork partition to divide F5	68 m2	150.00	10,200.00	
Ceilings				
Reinstating barrel vaulted ceiling in modern materials - fibrous plaster panels/decorations on plasterboard on metal framework	385 m2	500.00	192,500.00	
birdcage scaffolding	385 m2	95.00	36,575.00	
Plasterboard ceiling within F5	122 m2	30.00	3,660.00	
Internal doors				
refurbish double doors	2 Nr	1,500.00	3,000.00	
Fittings				
AV equipment	1 Item	50,000.00	50,000.00	
Decorations	430 m2	80.00	34,400.00	
Sub-total Auditorium			550,775	550,800

Mechanics' Institute Viability Assessment

Item	Quantity	Rate (£)	Amount	Section Totals
Space above F5				
Alterations				
Extending staircases from ST3/ST4	2 Nr	25,000.00	50,000.00	
Forming door opening from new stairs into F5 space	2 Nr	1,500.00	3,000.00	
Floors				
New floor structure in steel and timber, acoustic floor decking	175 m2	250.00	43,750.00	
Engineered oak boarding	175 m2	140.00	24,500.00	
Crash deck beneath floor	175 m2	65.00	11,375.00	
skirtings; 225mm high painted	56 m	35.00	1,960.00	
Walls				
making good plaster; skim finish	336 m2	40.00	13,440.00	
Ceilings				
suspended ceiling; MR plasterboard and skim	175 m2	50.00	8,750.00	
birdcage scaffolding	175 m2	65.00	11,375.00	
Internal doors				
new double doors	2 Nr	2,750.00	5,500.00	
Decorations	175 m2	60.00	10,500.00	
Sub-total space above F5			184,150	184,200
Balcony				
Floors				
Take up floorboards; dispose	81 m2	15.00	1,215.00	
Structural repairs to floors	81 m2	100.00	8,100.00	
Plywood deck on resilient layer; insulation between joists	81 m2	65.00	5,265.00	
Engineered oak boarding	81 m2	140.00	11,340.00	
Crash deck beneath floor	81 m2	95.00	7,695.00	
skirtings; 225mm high painted	38 m	35.00	1,330.00	
Walls				
making good plaster; skim finish - incl in Auditorium	m2	40.00		
Repairs to balustrade	1 Item	25,000.00	25,000.00	
Ceilings				
Incl in Auditorium	m2	500.00		
Internal doors				
refurbish double doors	2 Nr	1,500.00	3,000.00	
Fittings				
New seating	120 Nr	400.00	48,000.00	
Decorations	81 m2	80.00	6,480.00	
Sub-total Balcony			117,425	117,400
Building Services				
Mechanical services				
wet heating system, boilers; mix of cast iron column radiators and panel radiators; steel pipework; hot and cold water services; above ground drainage; ventilation to WC's (not ventilation to Kitchen)	3194 m2	400.00	1,277,600.00	
allow for comfort cooling in lecture/cinema	1 Item	25,000.00	25,000.00	
Electrical services				
sub mains, power distribution, lighting circuits and basic light fittings, fire alarm, emergency lighting, data, security alarm, telecoms	3194 m2	400.00	1,277,600.00	
Allowance for architectural light fittings	1 Item	100,000.00	100,000.00	
Builders work inconnection with services	5 %	2,680,200.00	134,010.00	
Testing and commissioning systems				
Testing	1 %	2,680,200.00	26,802.00	
Commissioning	2 %	2,680,200.00	53,604.00	
Sub-total Building Services			2,894,616	2,894,600

Mechanics' Institute Viability Assessment

Item	Quantity	Rate (£)	Amount	Section Totals
Audio Visual & Interpretation				
Audio visual	1 Nr	500,000.00	500,000.00	
Interpretative strategy, design and implementation e.g. script, narrative, graphics, boards, signage, features etc.	500 m2	1,000.00	500,000.00	
Sub-total Interpretation			1,000,000	1,000,000
External Works and Drainage				
Walls, fences, gates				
Cleaning, repointing, repairing perimeter plinth walls	110 m2	125.00	13,750.00	
decorating railings	132 m2	40.00	5,280.00	
allowance for repair of railings	1 Item	20,000.00	20,000.00	
Pavings within site				
York stone pavings to yard areas; allowance for kerbs	284 m2	225.00	63,900.00	
Soft landscaping	1 Item	5,000.00	5,000.00	
External Drainage - allowance for repairs, new runs	1 Item	30,000.00	30,000.00	
External services - allowance for new incoming services	1 Item	25,000.00	25,000.00	
Sub-total External Works and Drainage			162,930	162,900
Pedestrianisation Emelyn Square				
York stone pavings to yard areas; allowance for kerbs	1022 m2	250.00	255,500.00	
Street furniture - benches, planters, bins	1 Item	25,000.00	25,000.00	
New street floodlighting	10 Nr	2,000.00	20,000.00	
New street bollard lighting	20 Nr	500.00	10,000.00	
Signage	1 Item	5,000.00	5,000.00	
Soft landscaping	1 Item	5,000.00	5,000.00	
Sub-total External Pedestrianisation			320,500	320,500
Loose furniture, blinds, curtains				
Theatre chairs (upholstered)	350 Nr	300.00	105,000.00	
Theatre tables	20 Nr	200.00	4,000.00	
Reading Room chairs (upholstered)	200 Nr	300.00	60,000.00	
Reading Room tables	15 Nr	200.00	3,000.00	
Other chairs (not upholstered)	100 Nr	250.00	25,000.00	
Other tables	10 Nr	200.00	2,000.00	
Café - chairs	80 Nr	250.00	20,000.00	
Café - tables	20 Nr	200.00	4,000.00	
Café - tray holders, cutlery and condiment units, bin holders etc.	1 Item	20,000.00	20,000.00	
Meetings rooms furniture	10 Nr	3,500.00	35,000.00	
Cloakroom fit-out - purpose made joinery	1 Item	25,000.00	25,000.00	
Sundry cupboards and storage units throughout building	1 Item	200,000.00	200,000.00	
Blinds, curtains	1 Item	50,000.00	50,000.00	
Sub-total Furniture			553,000	553,000
Staging				
Staging system	200 m2	150.00	30,000.00	
Steps, handrails, shrouding	1 Nr	5,000.00	5,000.00	
Sub-total Staging			35,000	35,000

12.2 Gross Floor Area Rates

Item	Quantity	Rate (£)	Amount	£/m2 GFA
WC Areas (based on G11)				
Floors				
epoxy screed	68 m2	15.00	1,020.00	
vinyl sheet flooring; allowance for coved skirtings	68 m2	65.00	4,420.00	
Walls				
metal studwork partitions; plywood, MR plasterboard, skim	50 m2	135.00	6,750.00	
cleaning down existing plasterwork to remove paint	216 m2	15.00	3,240.00	
making good plaster; skim finish	216 m2	40.00	8,640.00	
allowance for wall tiling	75 m2	130.00	9,750.00	
Ceilings				
suspended ceiling; MR plasterboard and skim	68 m2	50.00	3,400.00	
Internal doors				
new	5 Nr	1,750.00	8,750.00	
refurbishment	1 Nr	750.00	750.00	
Fittings				
WC cubicles	13 Nr	1,000.00	13,000.00	
Vanity units	3 Nr	5,000.00	15,000.00	
Urinal ducts	6 Nr	750.00	4,500.00	
WC ducts	13 Nr	500.00	6,500.00	
Sanitary appliances	29 Nr	750.00	21,750.00	
Doc M	2 Nr	2,500.00	5,000.00	
Hand driers, baby change, paper dispensers, etc	1 Item	10,000.00	10,000.00	
Decorations	68 m2	40.00	2,720.00	
Sub-total WC areas			125,190	1,841
Circulation Areas (based on ST5, G42, G45, G46)				
Demolitions				
Demolishing brick wall	21 m2	50.00	1,050.00	
Demolishing half brick wall	42 m2	30.00	1,260.00	
Floors				
epoxy screed	73 m2	15.00	1,095.00	
Parquet flooring; clear finish	73 m2	150.00	10,950.00	
skirtings; 225mm high painted	34 m2	35.00	1,190.00	
Remedial work to staircase risers	1 Item	5,000.00	5,000.00	
Walls				
blockwork partitions; 215mm plaster	36 m2	120.00	4,320.00	
Footings to last	12 m	150.00	1,800.00	
making good plaster; skim finish	102 m2	40.00	4,080.00	
Ceilings				
plasterboard and skim	73 m2	35.00	2,555.00	
cornice	34 m2	50.00	1,700.00	
Internal doors				
new	2 Nr	1,750.00	3,500.00	
Fittings				
remedial work to balustrade to stair	1 Item	5,000.00	5,000.00	
Decorations	73 m2	40.00	2,920.00	
Sub-total Circulation Area			46,420	636

Mechanics' Institute Viability Assessment

Item	Quantity	Rate (£)	Amount	£/m2 GFA
Storage Areas (based on G25-29)				
Demolitions				
Demolishing half brick wall	69 m2	30.00	2,070.00	
Floors				
False floor to level up	73 m2	0.00	0.00	
vinyl sheet flooring	73 m2	65.00	4,745.00	
skirtings; 100mm high painted	26 m	20.00	520.00	
Walls				
metal studwork partitions; plywood, MR plasterboard, skim	14 m2	135.00	1,890.00	
making good plaster; skim finish	78 m2	40.00	3,120.00	
Ceilings				
suspended ceiling; MR plasterboard and skim	73 m2	50.00	3,650.00	
Internal doors				
new	1 Nr	1,750.00	1,750.00	
Fittings				
Allowance for shelving	1 Item	5,000.00	5,000.00	
Decorations	73 m2	40.00	2,920.00	
Sub-total Storage			25,665	352
Business Units (based on G43/41)				
Demolitions				
Previous abortive residentialconversion work	1 Item	4,000.00	4,000.00	
Forming opening between G43/44	1 Item	5,000.00	5,000.00	
Floors				
epoxy screed	83 m2	15.00	1,245.00	
carpet tiles	83 m2	40.00	3,320.00	
skirtings; 225mm high painted	52 m	35.00	1,820.00	
Walls				
making good plaster; skim finish	156 m2	40.00	6,240.00	
Ceilings				
suspended ceiling; MR plasterboard and skim	83 m2	50.00	4,150.00	
Internal doors				
new	1 Nr	1,750.00	1,750.00	
Decorations	83 m2	40.00	3,320.00	
Sub-total Circulation Area			30,845	372
Offices/ Meeting Rooms (based on G2-10)				
Demolitions				
One brick thick walls	36 m2	50.00	1,800.00	
Floors				
epoxy screed	187 m2	15.00	2,805.00	
carpet tiles	187 m2	150.00	28,050.00	
skirtings; 225mm high painted	76 m	35.00	2,660.00	
Walls				
Refurbish timber glazed partitions	63 m2	200.00	12,600.00	
Soundproofing/fireproofing glazed screens	63 m2	150.00	9,450.00	
Allowance for new stud partitions	1 Item	5,000.00	5,000.00	
Fire resisting glazed screens along G7-G9, G2-12	54 m2	1,750.00	94,500.00	
making good plaster; skim finish	228 m2	40.00	9,120.00	
Ceilings				
suspended ceiling; MR plasterboard and skim	187 m2	50.00	9,350.00	
Internal doors				
new	1 Nr	1,750.00	1,750.00	
Fittings				
Reception desk	1 Item	15,000.00	15,000.00	
Decorations	187 m2	40.00	7,480.00	
Sub-total offices/meeting rooms			199,565	1,067

12.3 Cost Risk Schedule

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Severity	Owner	Control Method	Risk Allowance		
						Quantity	Rate (£)	Risk Allowance
Design development risks								
Development of design during Project Development Phase					Contingency allowance; % of estimate value	7.5 %	13,452,300.00	1,008,900
Reliability of estimating data					Allow for inflation (see Summary)			
Pricing risk in SVP risers - complication and risk in work					Allow 100% on estimated sums	1 Item	13,452,300.00	13,452,300
Development of interior design					Design to be developed - allowance in above contingency in meantime; assumed also that scheme will be adjusted to suit budget			
Need to remove asbestos					Investigations required to reveal extent - see Exstimate Notes			
Construction risks								
Extent of asbestos					To be reviewed following investigation			
Additional work required following uncovering					Contingency allowance 50% additional	5.0 %	13,452,300.00	672,600
Employer change risks								
Change in scope of works					Budget to be amended in line with any scope change			
Changes in programme					Set realistic programme - budget to be reviewed if any changes			
Employer other risks								
Restrictions on works/ temporary works requirements; e.g. security, safeguarding, access for building occupants and visitors, temporary facilities, interpretation.					Review and establish during design development stage			
Changes in programme					Review funding strategy, set realistic programme			
Pricing risk in fees					Relevant consultants consulted as to likely fee			
Additional consultancies not considered at feasibility stage					Allowance made in 'Fees' for miscellaneous additional fees			0
TOTAL RISK ALLOWANCE								7,566,900

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