

Notes / main points and actions from site meeting 26 June 2012

Merton Abbey Chapter House

Present; Marcus Beale, Stephen Crabtree, John Hawks

Notes from meeting;

MB presented proposals and current thinking / design development. Main scope of works is;

- lowering earthen floor in centre of chapter house and providing a very functional under heated space in centre
- Removal of south wall panels (bridge in-fills) and replacing with glass foyer to let light in and provide passive warmth and provide new entrance from the south (improved connectivity with Abbey Mills / river etc)
- Large mirror on west interior wall to indicate arcade and creation of enclosed storage/toilet facilities at east end
- Creation of monastery garden
- Possible re-alignment of east (exterior) wall to improve safety of underpass and direct people out into monastery garden / new entrance (perhaps just a glimpse of monastic garden being visible to entice)

These works will achieve;

- Transforming space making it useable and functional and lot more welcoming
- Improve access in and out and accessibility within (massively) but in a sensitive manner
- Useable 9 months of the year
- Allows the real plan of the Abbey to start revealing itself
- Project is interesting and thought provoking in the way it juxtaposes the ancient and modern
- Long term flexibility / usability of space
- Amenity space for local flats

Issues around permissions / leases etc

- Will require scheduled ancient monument permission and planning permissions
- Aiming to get these permissions moving soon (September to January). If not attained by time of stage 2 hlf submission (Jan 2013), then a progress report on these issues with some "letters of comfort" should suffice
- Management /leasing issues – lease still be negotiated with Merton's Lawyers – this is dragging a bit but if cannot be resolved soon will need to show that this is somehow in hand and can be resolved before project starts (HLF bid is "rolling" approvals – so if this is a year 2 project , will need all permissions /leases in place before this is approved as part of the year 2 programme)- should be able to get management agreement / letter of intent from Merton as temporary solution until lease resolved.

Hlf Presentation – July 24th

- As well as giving an overview of the project (keep brief) should probably give a quick outline of "support" i.e. where the demand for the project has come from / how it will benefit local people / how local people could be engaged during the project etc, are there any opportunities for training and developing skills here (plenty I think)
- Possibly show a couple of pictures of how interior looks now, or existing state of items which are main focus of improvements (raised sand floor/wall/garden area etc)
- SC will send out a draft format/agenda/template for HLF presentations and can come to go over a rehearsal nearer the time if required.
- All background info (i.e. a written description of what the project is about, descriptive info and background figures/ideas on consultation and engagement etc needs to be with SC by mid September (in order to prepare stage 2 application) but "evidence" i.e. drawings / details / permissions / match funding evidence etc can be added a bit later (October/November). SC to clarify in more detail – a brief note has already been circulated showing requirements (in broad terms) but might (sc) prepare some more detailed briefing / templates nearer the time

- important thing is project is progressing well at the moment, so just carry on developing ideas as they are, bearing in mind need to progress permissions / lease issues and think about how to engage an audience (loads of potential for this)

Some other notes / observations

- there is a potential “phase 2” where even more of the priory could start to be revealed – but maybe just keep this in mind for now (don’t confuse the HLF etc)
- There are loads of great stories about the orientation of the site (Geomancy), the history and layout of the space etc. There is loads of potential here for “teaching” people , either as part of the project being developed by MPT or as another strand of the Living Wandle project