

Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
HERITAGE, CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORT SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: THURSDAY, 31 MARCH 2016 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Dr Barton (Chair)
Councillor Unsworth (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Bajaj
Councillor Govind
Councillor Halford

Councillor Shelton
Councillor Thalukdar

In Attendance:

Councillor Clair, Assistant City Mayor - Culture, Leisure and Sport

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59. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

60. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

61. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Heritage, Culture, Leisure and Sport Scrutiny Commission held on 4 February 2016 be confirmed as an accurate record.

62. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been received.

63. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS, STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer reported that no questions, representations or statements of case had been received.

64. UPDATE ON JEWRY WALL MUSEUM DEVELOPMENTS

The Head of Arts and Museums gave a presentation updating the Commission on the development of the Jewry Wall Museum. A copy of this presentation is attached at the end of these minutes for information.

The following points were made during discussion on this item:

- The museum building was one of the few modernist buildings still being used for a purpose similar to its original intended use;
- The bathhouse remains and wall were an English Heritage Guardianship Monument, recognising their national importance;
- There had been no major refurbishment of the museum since the 1980s;
- It was hoped that the original terrazzo flooring could be reinstated to a usable condition;
- The style of the proposed walkway from St Nicholas Circle to the Vaughn College podium would reflect the style of Jubilee Square, opposite it. The possibility of inserting glass in to the walkway and/or at its sides could be considered;
- The integrity of the 1960s interior of the building would be maintained;
- It was hoped that a range of designs and costings for the improvement works would be available by September 2016;
- External funding would be sought for some of the proposed works. This included a bid for Heritage Lottery Funding that had been developed with the Friends of Jewry Wall Museum to enable interpretation to be improved;
- The first phase of the work was likely to include the proposed walkway from St Nicholas Circle to the Vaughn College podium, designs for the feature staircase and external improvements;
- The second phase of the work would include work to the ground floor of the building, the reception area and the first floor;
- The “short wing” would be used to store collections while the work of the first two phases was carried out. A decision on the future use of that wing therefore would be taken at a later date;

- Work would be undertaken to improve the external staircase and prevent its misuse. One suggestion was that the corner of the building should be extended on to the staircase, but other alternatives also would be considered;
- The architect of the original building (Trevor Dannatt) would probably be involved in this project through his role as Chairman of the Twentieth Century Society, but he would not be retained by the Council;
- The success of local campaigners in saving the site of the museum from redevelopment as part of the Great Central Railway should be commemorated;
- The part of the building resting on “stilts” was light and airy, so could be developed as an area for use by young people. This also would help get schools involved in the museum. A further advantage was that the existing toilet facilities in that part of the building were suitable for this, rather than any other use;
- It was hoped that the redeveloped museum would be open for longer hours than previously;
- Promotion of the museum should be done on a wider basis than just promoting it to local schools. For example, hotels near the museum could be useful in encouraging people to visit the area, which contained a variety of visitor attractions;
- An exhibition could be established at the entrance to the museum showing the uses to which the building had been put at various times. For example, it had been used by the Film Society and the Archaeological Society, as well as for various lectures and exhibitions;
- Film of the original excavation of the Jewry Wall site could be shown on a loop at the museum, (for example, at the entrance);
- The effects of the weather on the Roman wall were not formally monitored, but a conservation team kept it under observation and English Heritage periodically cleaned weeds off it. The wall appeared to be robust at present; and
- Augmented reality would be used in the museum to enhance visitors’ understanding of what they were seeing. For example, photographs could be placed by windows to enable comparisons to be made of past and present views. Use also could be made of virtual reality, such as creating holograms of people talking to visitors.

Councillor Bajaj left the meeting at 6.05 pm, during consideration of the above comments.

AGREED:

- 1) That the plans for the development of the Jewry Wall Museum be welcomed and endorsed; and
- 2) That the Head of Arts and Museums be asked to:
 - a) Discuss with the architects for this project whether glass can be inserted in to the proposed walkway from St Nicholas Circle to the Vaughn College podium and/or up its sides;
 - b) Investigate whether film of the original excavation of the Jewry Wall site is available and can be shown as part of the exhibits at the redeveloped museum; and
 - c) Take account of the comments recorded above in consideration of proposals for the development of the Jewry Wall Museum.

65. UPDATE ON THE TASK GROUP REVIEW "CAPTURING THE ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE OF LEICESTER'S HERITAGE AND CULTURE"

The Chair gave a verbal update on the current Task Group review of the potential economic benefits of the city's heritage and culture, as follows:

- Two meetings of the Task Group had been held to date;
- Various people had provided evidence to the Task Group, including Peter Chandler (Leicester City Council's Development Manager Creative Workspace, based at the LCB Depot), Kevan Grantham (Leicester City Council's Arts Manager), Barbara Matthews (Pro Vice-Chancellor and Dean of Art, Design and Humanities, De Montfort University), Danny Myers (Commercial Director of The Mighty Creatives charity), and Geoff Rowe (Director of the Leicester Comedy Festival);
- Although the review was focussing on the economic impacts of the city's heritage and culture, it was becoming evident that the social impacts were equally important. The possibility of undertaking a formal review of these later in the year therefore was being considered;
- Evidence received showed that there had been a 17% increase in employment in creative industries across Leicester and Leicestershire in recent years. This was the result of work over a number of years that had been supplemented by events such as the reinterment of King Richard III, Leicester City Football Club's current success, events staged in the city during the 2015 Rugby World Cup, and events staged as part of the London 2012 Olympic programme;
- Jobs and investment had been attracted in to the city, (for example, from companies such as IBM), as a result of work done and in progress;

- Questions sometimes were raised by members of the public about expenditure on heritage projects when other services were financially constrained. The review had provided good evidence of benefits to the city and the way in which investment in heritage and culture was significant to the local economy. This was particularly important at a time when other cities were reducing expenditure on arts and cultural services and would be emphasised in the findings of the review;
- It was anticipated that one further meeting of the Task Group would be held, probably in late April 2016. All Members interested in the review were welcome to attend and contribute; and
- Draft recommendations from the review currently included the establishing of clearer methodologies for considering how economic data could be gathered, that the social impacts of the city's heritage and culture be investigated and that greater publicity be given to what was being achieved through investment in the city's heritage and culture.

The Scrutiny Policy Officer confirmed that those interviewed as part of this review had welcomed the work being done and felt that it would provide very useful data. In addition, an indication had been received that De Montfort University could be interested in working with the Council on similar research in the future.

The Chair suggested that, when the review was complete, a briefing on its findings could be held for members of this Commission. The Commission noted that, following this, the report would be passed direct to the Executive as, due to there being no further meetings of the Overview Select Committee scheduled in the current municipal year, that Committee had agreed that it did not need to consider the final report before the Executive considered it, (minute 99, "Scrutiny Commissions' Work Programmes", Overview Select Committee meeting of 24 March 2016 referred).

66. WORK PROGRAMME

The Commission received and considered its current work programme.

At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor Clair (Assistant City Mayor – Culture, Leisure and Sport) explained that preparation for the sports centres review was underway. For example:

- Consultation and condition surveys had been undertaken. Although the results generally were good, areas requiring investment had been identified;
- Some "mystery shopping" had been undertaken;
- Consideration had been given to how summer sports were provided and a similar exercise would be undertaken for winter sports;

- This work would be done in the context of the draft “Active Nation” strategy recently published by the government and the existing Active Leicester strategy;
- The Council was in the process of engaging a special adviser, to bring a new perspective to sports services;
- A Sports Strategy was being prepared, which it was anticipated would be available at the end of October 2016;
- The city’s outdoor gym equipment had high levels of use, which presented opportunities to include these in the sports centres review, particularly as it was recognised that some people could not afford to pay to use sports or leisure centres; and
- In view of the above, the focus of the Sports Centres review would become clear in late 2016 or early 2017, but in the meantime some funding had been allocated to upgrade the décor in some sports centres and to improve some areas, such as reception desks and showers.

AGREED:

- 1) That the 2015/16 work programme be received and noted; and
- 2) That the Assistant City Mayor – Culture, Leisure and Sport be asked to keep the Commission updated on progress with the Sports Centres review.

67. VOTES OF THANKS

Cllr Clair (Assistant City Mayor - Culture, Leisure and Sport) thanked the Chair, Vice-Chair, members of the Commission and officers for the way in which they had conducted meetings of the Commission during the previous municipal year.

In reply, the Chair thanked all involved for their work with the Commission, including those who had provided evidence on various topics, thus enabling the Commission to undertake its scrutiny function more effectively.

68. CLOSE OF MEETING

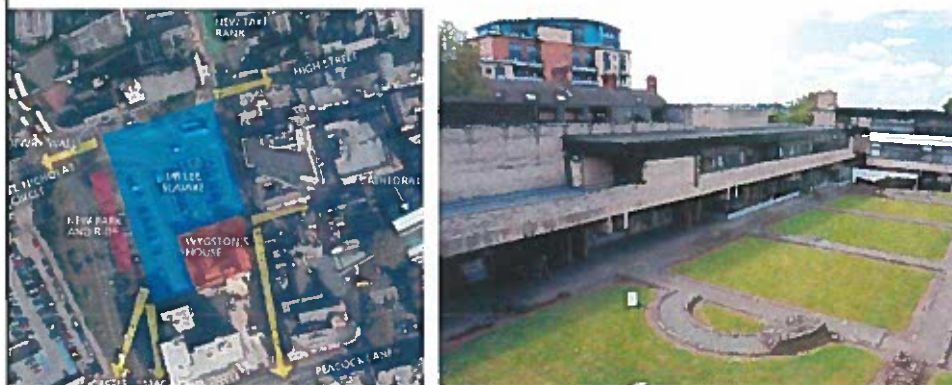
The meeting closed at 7.12 pm



Introduction

Current interest in Jewry Wall Museum and its future, arising from e.g.:

- Acquisition of Vaughan College from University of Leicester
- Connecting Leicester improvements - redevelopment of the Jubilee Square
- Redevelopment of Friars Mill and Waterside
- Jewry Wall Museum's 50th Anniversary
- Effect of discovery and reinterment of King Richard III
- New understanding of the value of Leicester's heritage



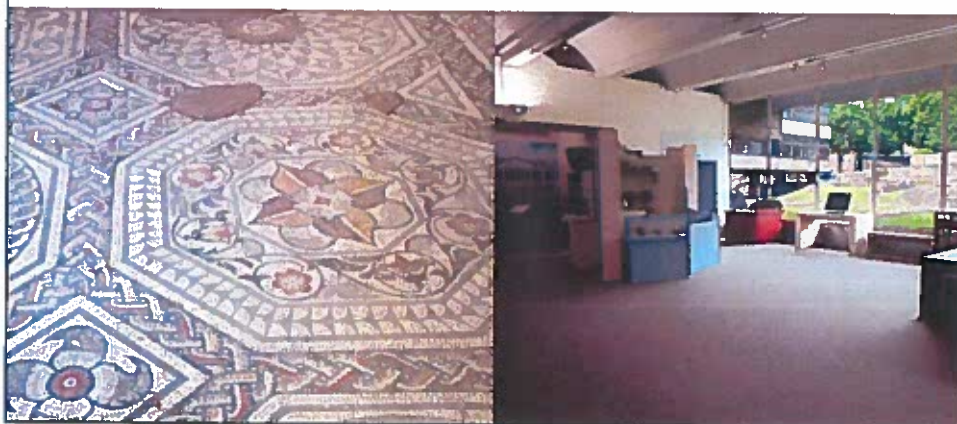
Background

- Acclaimed modernist building by Trevor Dannatt
- Vaughan College opened 1962, operated by the University of Leicester
- Jewry Wall Museum opened 1966, operated by Leicester City Council
- Unique bathhouse remains and wall
- Outstanding roman and early Leicester collections
- Finds from the major excavations e.g. High Cross excavation
- Thriving archaeological community in Leicester and Leicestershire
- Active friends group- Friends of Jewry Wall Museum



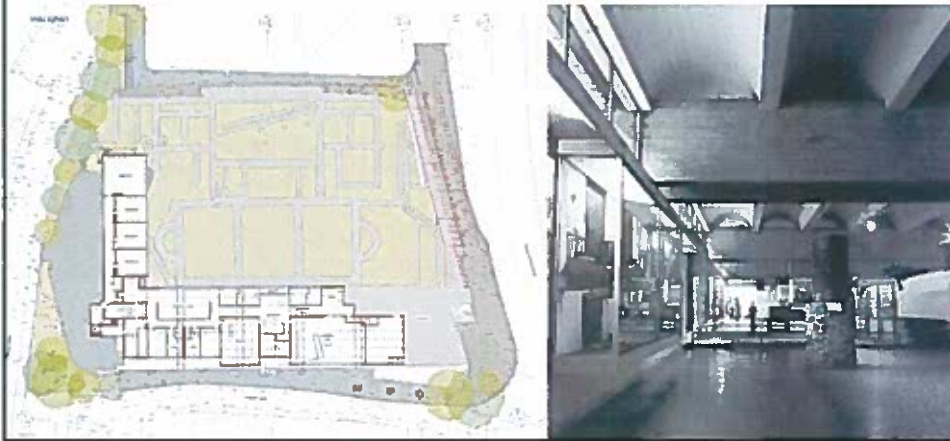
Issues

- Range of options for using whole building
- Museum and surroundings now "tired" and dated
- Scope to increase visitor numbers from 20-25,000 pa to c 75,000 pa
- Create visitor attraction with regional and national appeal



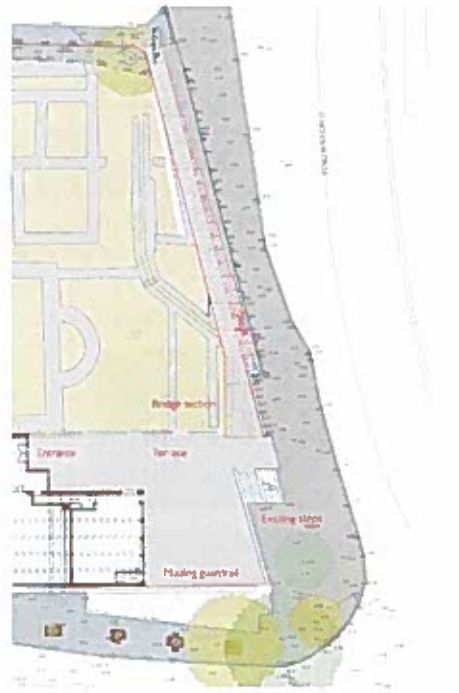
Work done so far

- September 2015 acquisition of Vaughan College completed
- Condition surveys carried out
- July 2015 – January 2016 review of best use of whole building and site
- Consideration of access, presentation, visitor experience, operations, and sustainability of museum.

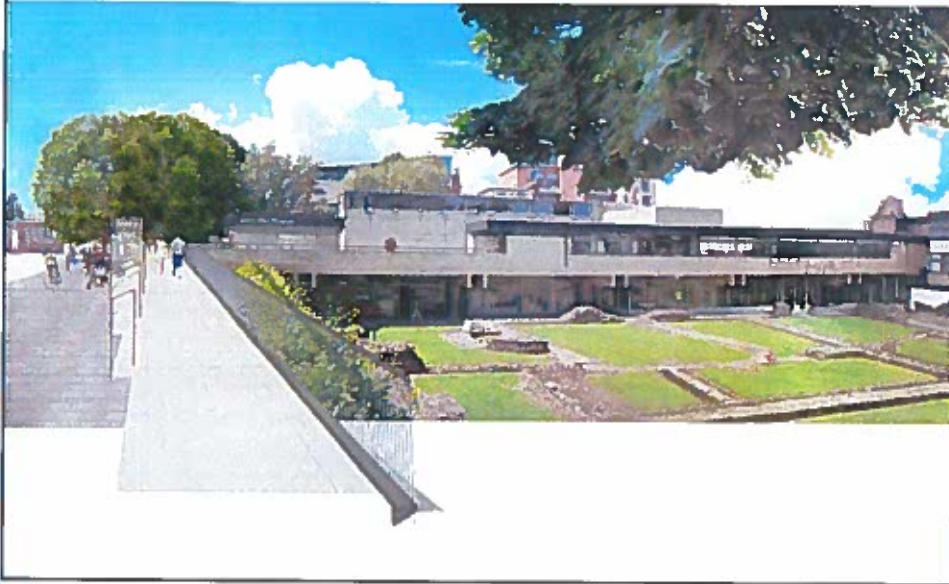


New walkway from St Nicholas Circle to Vaughan College podium

- Archaeological investigations carried out before work can start
- Scheduled Monument Consent applied for



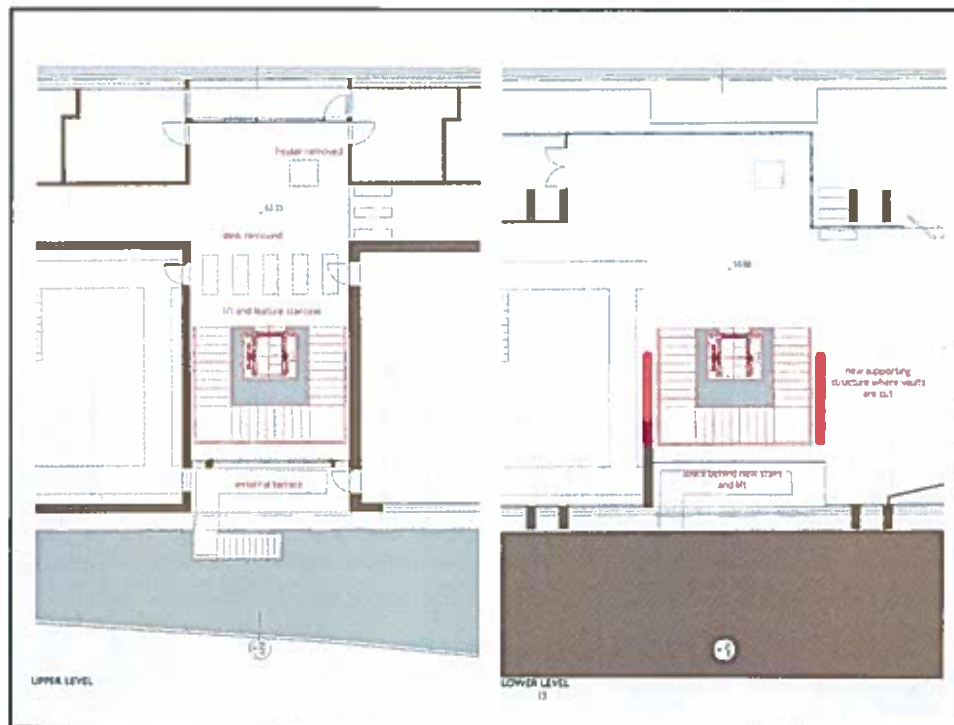
New walkway



New museum access

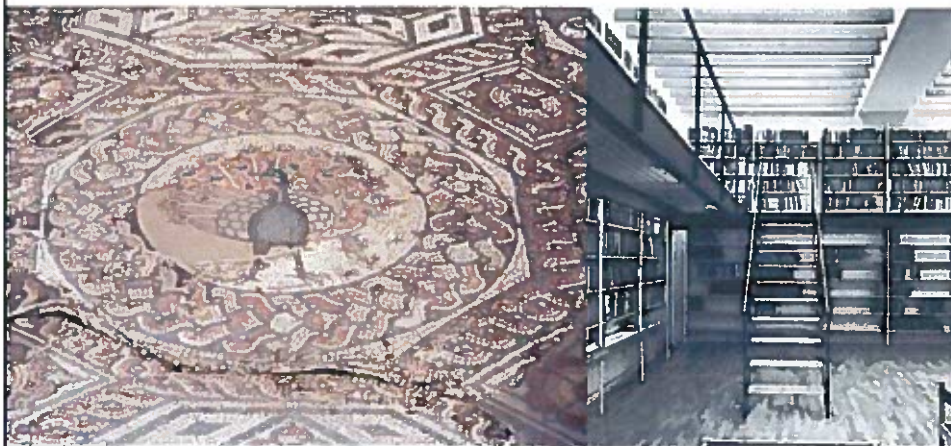
- From Vaughan College entrance
- Lift and staircase to display areas
- Lift and staircase being designed now
- Design for first floor to be finalised as part of overall museum design
- Restore integrity of 1960s interior
- Retain room configuration as far as possible





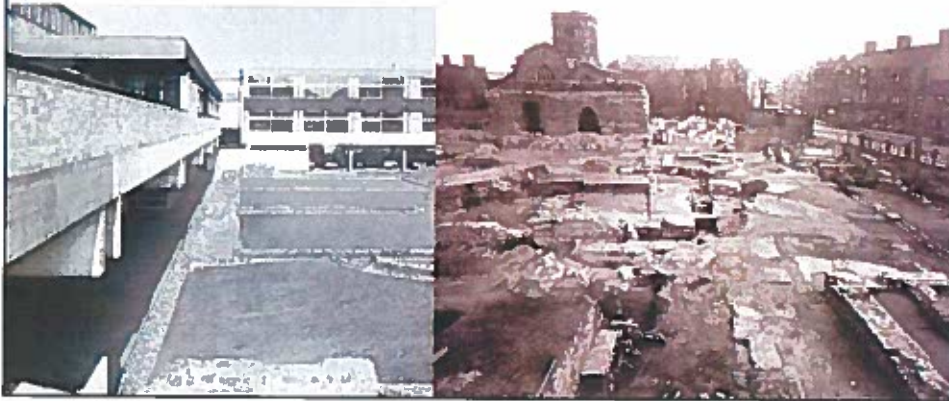
Redisplay and re-configure museum

- Design scheme to be commissioned
- Costed options will enable plans to be finalised for both floors
- Conservation work to start on major items e.g. peacock pavement



Improve external site

- Restore archaeological layout
- Improve signage
- Improve interpretation
- Clean concrete
- Repaint fascias and windows
- Restore cobbled path between Jewry Wall and St Nicholas Church



Timescales

- Walkway will be complete in 2017
- Other site improvements complete during 2016
- Museum plans finalised by December 2016



Potential budget

- First phase expected to cost c. £1.5 million (subject to formal decision)
- Costings for the next phase by December 2016
- Total budget could be over £5 million – but costs not yet established
- External funding bid will be considered



