

## **Almonry Development Working Group**

Notes from a video-conference meeting on 03 July 2020

### **Present:**

Stephen Gray, Mark Anderson (J D Clark Architects), Stephen O'Regan (Blade Consulting), Cllrs Favell, Kiloh and Sharman

### **Revised project**

The group confirmed to MA and SO'R that the re-instatement of the south wing is no longer part of the project:

On 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020, Council agreed that a programme of works to undertake selected agreed repairs, maintenance and improvement of services needs to be initiated as soon as possible, for efficient and safe working in a heritage building in order to fulfil statutory and moral obligations and proceed with a compromise proposal comprising:

- repairs to the roof, guttering and down pipes, chimneys, windows, masonry, panelling, ceilings, staircase and roof insulation;
- renewal of services eg heating, lighting, rewiring, fire-proofing and alarms, toilets and kitchens;
- low cost conversion of floor space to include a Tourist Information Point;
- making the ground floor accessible for those with disabilities.

MA will work out which items from the tender document will be required in order to meet the scope defined above. A cost, based on tender prices, will be worked out from this. This will take a few weeks. There will be additional costs - see below.

There are outstanding issues:

- accessible toilet
- heating
- disabled access
- additional repairs

### **Accessible toilet**

There should be enough space to install an accessible toilet in the area where the tea point will go (currently the utility/store area). The turning space and access will need to be checked, the toilet designed and planning permission applied for. In case the extension is built in the future, the access to the courtyard should be retained. The wall between the kitchen and the public area in the meeting room will need to be removed (as in tender) to enable disabled access to the tea point and accessible toilet.

The current outdoor toilet could be left for now or refurbished sufficiently to provide a toilet for visitors to the gardens and museum.

## **Heating**

MK has ascertained from RDC that building regulations to install electric heating will not be required as this is an existing building, not a new build. Electric radiator heating is quicker to install and has less impact because there is no pipework. Electricity from renewable sources is in line with Government initiatives to phase out fossil fuels and BTC's Environmental Policy. It was noted that running costs for electric heating are now directly comparable to gas.

As BTC has the thermal output requirements for each room, it is hoped that the contractors may be able to provide costs for electric heating. The installation cost should be less, as no pipes are required, but radiators will need to be provided. This type of heating would also give flexibility going forward.

## **Disabled access**

SG was keen to revisit the idea of a ramp access to the front door once again. MA agreed that the levels may allow this. The front door would have to be re-hung to open outwards. There may still not be sufficient room for a mobility scooter to turn as the stairs are close to the front door. Plans for a ramp would have to be drawn up (at a cost previously discussed).

It was felt that access to the garden was important as it is a public space. The impact on the use of rooms needs to be considered. The possibility of an entrance to The Almonry from Market Square in the future also needs to be considered. *(Post meeting note - Council's desire to change the footpath by the Cricket Ground into a shared use path in the wake of the COVID restrictions will result in more pedestrians and cyclists accessing The Almonry from Western Avenue.)*

SO'R will check whether or not the path by the museum was included in the tender. The costs and benefits will need to be weighed up and, if necessary, a cheap ramp to the front installed in the first instance.

The rear slopes and the front ramp would both need planning permission.

## **Additional repairs**

There will be additional repairs that will be required now that the extension will not be built. These include roof repairs to the catslide and refurbishment of the door from the kitchen to the courtyard.

## **Tenders**

SO'R noted that both Walkers and Vulcan Ellis are aware that no final decision has been made due to COVID restrictions. Tender prices are probably held for now.

## **Matters to note**

SG has made a generous offer to act as Project Manager.

Cllrs will need to discuss the matters raised with the Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer.

A list of changes requiring planning consent needs to be drawn up.

Additional prices from the contractor will be required for changes from tender.

The scope will need to be defined, costed and put to Council.

Next meeting: To be agreed

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