

LEAMINGTON CREATIVE QUARTER

The public were invited to view an online virtual exhibition. Due to COVID restrictions visits to the site in person were not possible and so the virtual exhibition provided an opportunity to feedback on the key design aspects. The consultation took place between 3rd and 15th November 2020. It was advertising via our social media channels, via WDC's portals and through other stakeholders including local businesses. A presentation was also done to the Leamington Society, and the Heritage Assessment was shared with The Leamington History Group. In total there were 138 respondents to the online questionnaire and 3 respondents sent direct emails.

We have analysed the responses to the set questions as per the below. This part of the consultation was multiple choice with an opportunity for free text.

Question	Response
Overall, do you view the proposals as positive or negative?	67% Positive 20% Neutral 13% Negative
Overall, how would you describe the plans for this area?	42.2% Exciting 15.2% Ambitious 26.5% Limited 5.3% Unsustainable 4.5% Creative 3.8% Safe

	2.5% Sustainable
Warwick District Council's mission is to ' <i>Make Warwick District a great place to live, work and visit.</i> ' Do you agree or disagree that the development of this area supports the Council's vision?	<p>66.6% Strongly agree or agree</p> <p>19.3% Disagree or strongly disagree</p> <p>14.1% Neutral</p> <p>Further analysis of the responses shows that those that disagree are those that have concerns about losing performance and rehearsal space and those who have stated that the proposals should be offering a wider mix of creative space including artist studios, exhibition space etc. The same goes for those who considered the scheme to be 'limited'.</p>
How would you most likely travel to the area?	<p>59.7% Walk</p> <p>26.9% Car/motorbike</p> <p>6% Bike - many respondents asked for cycle parking</p> <p>3.7% Train</p> <p>3.7 % Other</p>
Do you think the yard needs to be more visible from Spencer Street?	<p>61.8% stated that the area needs to be more visible from Spencer Street.</p> <p>14.7 % No</p> <p>15.4% Maybe</p>

	<p>8.1% Other</p> <p>Various comments about good signage needed, from the station and to the rest of the old/new town. Needs to be visible coming from new town, past the Pump Rooms. Need to be mindful of noise as a residential area too.</p>
Will the proposals make you feel safer in the area?	<p>35.8 % of respondents agreed that the proposals would make them feel safer.</p> <p>45.5% would maybe feel safer</p> <p>18.7% would not feel safer</p> <p>Those saying maybe commenting that it would depend on lighting, people in the area and other safety aspects along with such things as regular bus services in the evenings.</p>
A recent collaboration with Creative Leamington and Brink Contemporary Arts gave some of the existing buildings a new lease of life with colourful, playful Street Art. Would you like to see more or less of buildings covered in street art?	<p>50.7% of respondents liked the Street Art and wanted to see more of it.</p> <p>A further 34.4% stated maybe.</p> <p>14.9% said no, not keen on this style of art.</p> <p>There were some concerns over the use of street art, not using too much, not painting on listed buildings, ensuring the quality of the street art, it needs to be of a high standard to reflect the town's position as a world class centre of creative excellence.</p>

A number of comments were sent in addition to answering the survey. The schedule below summarises the responses that were received that were relevant to the planning application, along with how they have been addressed in the scheme. Where numerous responses on similar themes were received they have been grouped by topic. Whilst a number were supportive as represented by the above statistics, some concerns were raised. The main concerns and comments related to the accessibility and visibility of the site, public access to the URC and the proposed use as office space, sustainability and cycling provision.

Respondents Comments	Scheme Response
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anything that adds to the vibrancy of the town centre is a good thing. 2. Well done, it's very exciting and I can't wait to see this grow. 3. This will be a positive addition to the town. 4. This is such an exciting project and will build on the need to continue to develop more community-based infrastructures within the town. 5. Looks like a really exciting addition to Leamington and will help improve that area of Leamington immensely/make walking near the station at night much more pleasant! 6. I think it is wonderful! I can't wait to see it all in reality. 7. I love the street art. I also am very 'for' the preservation of historical buildings though and I would like to see a mix of both. The current street art is positioned well to make others use dull areas beautiful. 	<p>Support noted.</p> <p>The three original buildings are being maintained in accordance with this feedback. The vast majority of original features in the URC are being retained and restored. A heritage assessment has been carried out and is submitted as part of the application. The report was reviewed by The Leamington History Group ahead of submitting the application.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I think the proposals are meeting the needs of the digital community not the arts in general and are commercially driven with over emphasis on office space. They ignore the wider artistic community and don't really show a vision to develop a series of spaces for independent smaller scale visual artists, musicians, community groups. 2. Was excited about the church regeneration until I realised it will just be office space (albeit funky office space), so this building will only be accessible to a small number of people. Would prefer this to be publicly accessible as an exhibition space or similar so that more members of the community can benefit from it. 3. Personally, I wonder who will want to use the underground/crypt space in the URC as an office. It seems very dark, enclosed, uninspiring, no natural light. Better to have this as a flexible space for film screenings, meetings, dark room etc. 4. The current plans for the URC focus on business/commercial provision. To endorse the term "Creative Quarter", further work is needed to ensure 	<p>The restoration of the United Reform Church will require significant investment to make the building safe and fit for purpose. The proposed use maximises the opportunity for the building's restoration, preventing further decay and decline. This is also the only use that has been permitted by Warwick District Council.</p> <p>Earlier rounds of consultation for The Big Picture highlighted a real need for "grow on" space to creative businesses who are struggling to find suitable premises in the town that may move out to business parks or out of the area altogether if suitable premises are not available.</p> <p>The proposed use of the buildings is the new Use Class E making the buildings as flexible as possible within the definition of creative business space.</p> <p>We are considering how we can make parts of the URC open to the public, this could be in</p>

<p>artistic and cultural activity throughout the year in an indoor space within the Quarter. There are many organisations in Warwick District who would welcome the opportunity for a shared environment to coordinate artistic offering to the District community.</p> <p>5. Instead of so much of the space being reserved for offices - which is going against the current trend - it would be wonderful if spaces could be used by artists and the community. Such spaces could be rented on a monthly subscription basis. For instance, if there was a ceramics studio created, many local ceramicists would be interested in having access to such a space.</p>	<p>the form of a café/coffee shop for the wider creative community.</p> <p>As part of the investigation into the Basement and also looking at opportunities for re-use there is an opportunity to re-open existing lightwells and glazing to the lower levels and also to introduce new limited glazed areas within the Crypt themselves. This will be explored in consultation with the conservation Architect once further details have been submitted.</p> <p>This is the first project of the Creative Quarter and as we move forwards, CDP and WDC envisage including other options which could satisfy these demands.</p>
<p>Although I am a big fan of street art it needs to be used to make plain or ugly areas more beautiful. However, I would be concerned if a beautiful building became covered in it</p>	<p>Street art is not proposed to be used on the URC.</p> <p>The quality of any street art on the other buildings will be actively managed to ensure that it is of the highest quality.</p>
<p>Appreciate architecture is subjective, but in my view, you should review the exterior design of the Crown Building, as it is going to date badly with those weird Origami triangles, certainly needs something to jazz it up, but not convinced those triangles work! :)</p> <p>I think it's a great idea but the new architecture concept is not great in my opinion. The faceted feature cladding is fussy and in reality, will look poor and dated from day 1 and then perhaps the mellower brick bits sit back too much. I would prefer a simpler and more robust approach that picks up on Leamington's heritage and industrial yard typology.</p>	<p>The original design covered the whole facade of the building, but this has been stripped back to being around the entrance only which we consider achieves a better balance.</p> <p>The materials chosen for the proposals are deliberately respectful of the character of the area. Due to the nature of the project and the opportunity to enhance creativity there is a need within this proposal to increase the impact where possible and this has been done by using a historic reference to develop a concept. The materials will be natural unpainted materials and as such will be sustainable. As they are self-finished they will of course change over time but due to the sheltered nature of the site they should stay vibrant and impactful for a significant period of time.</p> <p>As acknowledged these features are subjective but we will be reflecting the history of the area with a relevant industrial theme. A number of people are generally supportive of</p>

	<p>having a statement building(s) that show a point of difference.</p>
<p>Some of the proposed use of Spencer's Yard seems to duplicate the recent revamp of 1 Mill Street. Would recommend folding that development into Creative Quarter plans to ensure projects aren't competing and offer the town a RANGE of new spaces. The appetite is definitely there, but the real deficit seems to be in large, open-plan studio space.</p>	<p>All of the buildings are planned to provide largely open plan floorplates with the provision of some meeting rooms and break out spaces. Given the different sizes and shapes of the buildings, each will cater to different types of occupier.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Would like to see much stronger emphasis on environmental sustainability of the building and activities - this is an opportunity to lead in this area and showcase new ways of doing things, in line with the Council's Climate Emergency declaration. 2. I would have expected to see a more future proofed scheme for a carbon negative proposal, aligned with Warwick DC pledge for carbon neutrality by 2025? This new development for creative industry and local economy should support health, wellbeing, a place of sustainable work and a place to be proud of for local residents. There must be a stronger emphasis for carbon neutral approach and landscape led experience. As a spa and park town it is disappointing to see a missed opportunity in a weak landscape focused scheme. 	<p>An energy and sustainability statement have been submitted as part of the application which considers a range of options for each of buildings with a strong emphasis on environment sustainability. Based on current regulations, the Nursery and Old Dole Office will achieve 40% betterment above Building Regulation requirements. Compared to existing office building stock, there is a forecast reduction in energy and CO2 of just under 60%. This has been achieved by improvements to the building's fabric, incorporation of photovoltaics, air source heat pumps, and encouraging sustainable modes of transport. As the URC is a Grade II Listed building, the interventions in the building are limited but the energy efficiency of the building is still being significantly improved to be in keeping with modern Building Regulation standards.</p> <p>Further detail on the landscape of the scheme has been developed since the public consultation and further information can be found in the Design and Access Statement.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Needs to have more provision for cycle parking than current thinking allows, and all access must be to 'Gear Change' standards. (DoT 27th July 2020) 2. Ground covering? Cobbles please. Places to secure bicycles 	<p>Two secure cycle parking stores are proposed including a total of 18 spaces. Office spaces have also been designed to encourage cycling through the provision of showering and changing facilities.</p> <p>The current access to the site cannot be widened due to the location of existing buildings. Safety for cyclists has been improved by limiting the amount of car parking on-site and prioritising cycling and pedestrian movement. Existing surfaces will also be</p>

	improved, and increased lighting will improve safety.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. My biggest concern is access. Access is appalling from Spencer Street and without knocking down buildings (which I think you should do) I don't know how you can improve this. Access is non-existent from the Pump Room/Victoria Colonnade side. It seems pivotal to me that you need to connect the town with the creative quarter. 2. The only way Spencer Yard will work is if you have a walk way across the river, from behind the library. 3. The proposal needs a route out to the Colonnades or the bridge to the pump room gardens shown in the first draft reinstated. Otherwise the fact that it's in a dead end will hamstring the project. 4. Access to the site is close to a busy junction, and crossing the roads in the area can feel unsafe as things stand. Vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists entering and leaving site would create a hazard and probably impact the existing businesses and residents adversely, as well as noise pollution. The entrance to the site is quite small, itself a hazard for emergency vehicles attending any incidents at the site. 5. Because there is only one way in and out of the site, evacuation during an emergency could be a concern. 6. Because the entrance to the site is not very visible and looks exactly like what it is, the rear service road to the buildings on Victoria Colonnade, it would be very easy to pass by without knowing there was anything there. 	<p>As it is acknowledged, the proposed accesses are existing and cannot be amended but can be improved through wayfinding and lighting which have been incorporated into the scheme.</p> <p>WDC have commissioned a specialist wayfinding and signage company to implement improved provision across Leamington Town Centre in preparation for the town hosting the Commonwealth Games in 2022. This will include improvements to the route from the station to the town centre along Spencer Street but does not form part of this planning application.</p> <p>We are supportive of the possibility of creating wider links to the Colonnade and have discussed this with WDC. Whilst this is not included in the application we are very supportive of such a proposal.</p>
What is happening to the organ in the URC?	The organ was removed from the former URC many years ago prior to CDP's involvement in the site.

Some comments and queries were more far reaching, so whilst cannot be addressed in the planning application we have sought to provide some answers to the key themes here.

Financial structure/Funding

CDP have fully funded all the work that has gone into the Creative Quarter to date, including the creation of The Big Picture and the Spencer Yard proposals at their own risk. The Council hasn't allocated a fund to the Creative Quarter but does have officer time available. However, the Executive Board have agreed that any income for Spencer Yard will be "ringfenced" to be invested back into Creative Quarter projects as needed.

Funding will come from a variety of sources including the private and public sector to make the project viable.

Events in The Yard

As set out in the consultation documents, events in the yard are not proposed to form part of the planning application but we are grateful for your feedback which has been very useful to inform future plans. Overall the response has been extremely positive and your comments are being considered by the project team on how the space could be used. WDC will continue to lead on the proposals for the events space with input from CDP as required. It is acknowledged that further consultation is likely to be required, and the team will look to take a collaborative approach with stakeholders. The team think this area has a number of opportunities for the wider creative community which are being explored.

The provision of performance, exhibition and artist space

CDP has permission from WDC to transform Spencer Yard into a creative business hub which is reflected in the application documents. The creative business space has been designed to be as flexible as possible to be able to adapt to different occupiers needs, and provide a range of spaces. The buildings will be as flexible as possible within the creative business use.

Potential public access to parts of the buildings will be explored, it is hoped to attract a café/coffee shop which could offer some public access and possible small creative community-based activities within that space.

In addition, community activities, rehearsals and performances that take place in North Hall will not be affected by these developments and will continue as normal.

We have received a number of comments about the inclusion and need for performance, exhibition and artist space so whilst they can't be included in this scheme, will be considered for potential future projects.

This is the first project of the Creative Quarter and as we move forwards, CDP and WDC envisage including other options which could satisfy these demands. Other potential CQ projects are shown in the Big Picture document which are being reviewed by WDC to progress more through 2021.

Signage and Access

The need for great Wayfinding and for people to be able to find Spencer Yard and move around the town in a well organised, simple and safe way is recognised. The entrances onto Spencer Yard have the opportunity to announce the place which has been considered as part of the application in terms of lighting and landscaping.

In addition, WDC have just commissioned a specialist wayfinding and signage company to implement improved provision across Leamington Town Centre in preparation for the town hosting the

Commonwealth Games in 2022. This will include improvements to the route from the station to the town centre along Spencer Street.

WDC are in discussions with other third parties about creating new accesses into the yard which CDP fully supports.