

Heath Town Baths

Presentation to Economy and Growth Scrutiny Panel

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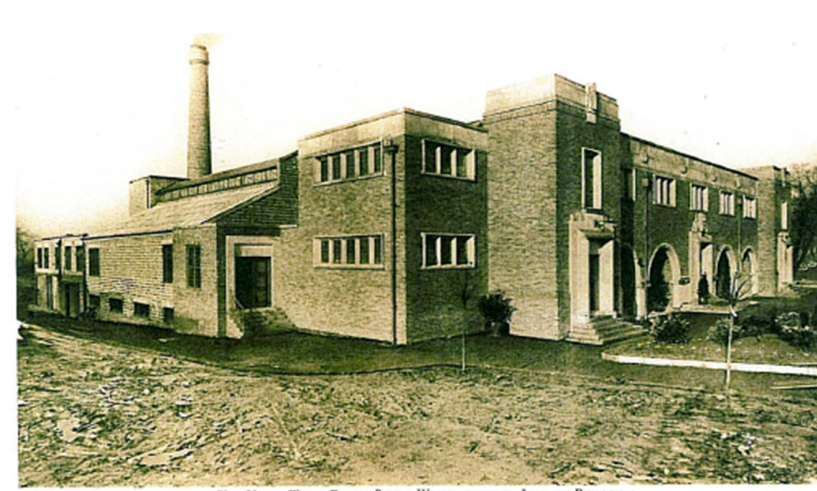
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Heath Town Baths: from closure to renewal



Background

- The former Heath Town Baths and Library is a **grade II listed building**.
- The swimming pool and public baths **opened in 1932** with the library opening the following year.
- Heath Town Baths represented an unusual, if not unique, collaboration between two council committees determined to **improve the living conditions** of the local population.
- The building housed a main pool, a children's pool, slipper baths and a wash house with drying facilities which **served the wider community**.
- It is situated in **old Heath Town**, close to Almshouses, Holy Trinity Church with its Lych Gate and the War memorial in Heath Town Park.
- All these features are also **statutorily listed** and the area is therefore rich in heritage value and local history.



THE HEATH TOWN PUBLIC BATHS, WASH-HOUSE AND LIBRARY BUILDINGS



Heath Town Baths Closure

- In 2000, a survey of the swimming facilities, identified a **number of structural issues** The restoration costs for addressing short term remediation were estimated at around £900k+.
- The emerging Council's Swimming Strategy business case explored the opportunities to support the delivery of **new build modern leisure facilities** which required the displacement of leisure services at Bushbury Baths and Heathtown baths. This led to the investment case for the leisure pool at **Bentley Bridge**, and the **Bert Williams Leisure Centre**.
- **Cabinet on 16th January 2003** approved to the partial closure of the Heath Town Baths following a detailed review and cost benefit analysis. Heath Town library was subsequently replaced by the **new Wednesfield library**.
- Alternative uses for the Heathtown Baths were considered following Cabinet approval for closure to include the potential Primary Care Centre (PCT) and interest received from the Tessa Sanderson Foundation (TSF) to explore the potential for a Sports Academy which resulted in an exclusivity agreement being entered into between the Council and the Foundation although the Full Business Case was unable to satisfy VFM (value for money) criteria.
- **Cabinet Resources Panel on 20 January 2015**, it was formally agreed that the building was to be put to the open market.

Developer Appointment

- A procurement exercise was undertaken to select a commercial advisor and Avison Young (then GVA) were appointed to undertake a **Strategic Marketing Review** and following which a formal two stage marketing campaign was undertaken.
- **Five proposals for the site** were received following expressions of interest stage and two of the developers were invited to submit their final proposals for **best and final bids**.
- Following a detailed appraisal of the two short listed bids, Avison Young produced a recommendation report to satisfy s123 (Local Government Act) requirements, to accompany the Cabinet report which identified Gaddu Associates as the preferred bidder.
- **Cabinet on 10th January 2017** approved the selection of Gaddu Associates as preferred bidder, who have a track record of bringing buildings back into use and the approval for an Agreement for Lease (AfL) that would be entered into subject to planning consent being obtained.

Key scheme benefits

- The proposals have been developed in **consultation with Historic England**, the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the local community.
- The involvement of the local communities (particularly through the **Heathfield Park Community Action Network**) has been a key feature in developing these proposals and the uses are consistent with the Heathfield Park Neighbourhood Plan.
- The scheme proposes the building to be restored to a range of beneficial uses including a banqueting hall, day nursery, training and conference rooms, business start up space and **multi-purpose community function rooms**
- An agreed **Skills and Employment Plan** which has been worked up with the Council's Wolves at Work team. A procurement strategy which seeks to use local contractors and suppliers wherever possible.



Heathfield Park

Local Neighbourhood Partnership

wolverhampton.gov.uk






Developer Activity

- Gaddu Associates presented at the Heath Park Community Fair to engage with the community on their proposals. Heath Town ward Councilors and the Mayor were in attendance.
- There was an **overwhelmingly positive** response to the proposals which are detailed in the Community Consultation Statement.
- Wolverhampton North-East Member of Parliament has received regular correspondence and project updates.
- **Enhanced security measures** on site to include CCTV installation, a CCTV tower, “anti burglar spinners” and increased security patrols.
- A License agreement is in place with Gaddu Associates to take early occupation of the former library. This will assist with ensuring an **active 24-hour presence** on site to address anti-social activity.
- The **cost of these works is to be met by Gaddu Associates** in advance of completion of lease as part of their ongoing commitment to proactively support management arrangements prior to works commencing.



The Planning Application

- Planning (22/01088/FUL) and listed building consent (22/01089/LBC) applications have been submitted to the local planning authority by Gaddu Associates and these were validated on October 12th.
- The application will be considered at Planning Committee in January 2023.
- Obtaining planning consent is a condition as part of the Cabinet approvals.

Document	Summary of contents	Included in planning application
Planning and Access Statement	Provides a brief history of the site and sets out a planning context for the proposed redevelopment	
Heritage Statement	Provides an analysis of the building's key heritage features and identifies those which are of the most significance	
Transport Statement	Uses data from other similar schemes to predict traffic flows and assesses the impacts at peak times on the existing network. Also discusses the amount and arrangement of car and coach parking provided.	
Noise Impact Assessment	Models the likely noise impacts from the development and makes recommendations for mitigation where necessary	
Pre-application Community Consultation report	Describes the ways in which Gaddu Associates has proactively worked with local communities to ensure that the refurbished building meets their needs	

Project Programme to Completion

- The detailed planning and listed building application was **validated on 12th October 2022**. The LPA and the developer worked through the application in a positive and proactive way to resolve any potential issues.
- **The full lease (125 years)** will be signed as soon as possible after the application is approved, allowing for the legal challenge period to elapse.
- The lease will grant a legal interest in the site to Gaddu Associates. Private bank funding is already secured subject to planning and a long lease and formal applications can then be made to Heritage Lottery.
- The Council's role going forward will be to **monitor progress against milestones** set out in the lease and others as agreed with the developer.



Heritage Consultants

Outputs & Outcomes

Heritage asset restored



Key workers childcare provision



New high-class children's day nursery



Jobs created at children's day nursery

 **32**

Business start-up space



Brownfield land brought back into use

1.2ha

Floorspace restored

2,750m²

New floorspace created

78m²

Creation of a community café



New banqueting suite with high-class catering facilities



Jobs created at banqueting suite

 **52**

Multi-purpose community function rooms

Training and conference rooms

Electric vehicle charging points



Wheelchair friendly & disabled parking



Minutes from New Cross Hospital

5 

Traineeship and apprenticeship offer



Construction jobs



Total jobs created

80+

Sensitive retention of trees and tree planting



Local art exhibitions and crafts fayres

