

**Report Title: West Yard Storage Project**

**Report of: Emma Dagnes, Deputy Chief Executive, Alexandra Park and Palace**

### **1. Purpose**

1.1 To advise and inform the SAC-CC on the principles of a new storage building located in the West Yard of Alexandra Palace in advance of presenting the proposal to the Alexandra Park and Palace Charitable Trust Board

### **2. Recommendations**

2.1 That the Committee note the contents of this report and advises the main Board where appropriate.

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### **3. Executive Summary**

3.1 The East Wing Restoration Project takes ownership in September 2016 of spaces which are currently used to house event infrastructure. Failure to find an appropriate new home for this critical infrastructure will significantly impact the gross margin and ability for the sales team to win and retain clients therefore limiting the gift aid to the Trust.

3.2 Following investigations it was identified that there were no appropriate spaces within the Palace itself to house infrastructure of this magnitude. Therefore attention was focused on the opportunity to build a new storage facility in the West Yard adjacent to the West Hall and Great Hall.

3.3 The Surveyor to the Fabric, Purcell, was commissioned by APPCT to undertake a feasibility study and prepare concept designs for a building which provides storage for the displaced event infrastructure but also provides, an opportunity for commercial space, structural support to the North Wall and to bring the derelict North West Tower back into use.

3.4 An application for planning and listed building consent is to be made in April 2016 for a new structure to support the need for a new storage unit, provide an upper space for a potential function room and roof terrace, re-support the North Wall and bring back into

use the derelict North West Tower and restore fabric in accordance with the Fabric Maintenance Plan.

#### 4. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 - No

N/A

### 5. Background

- 5.1 As previously highlighted to the SACCC the East Wing Restoration Project funded by the HLF and Haringey Council will progressively occupy and displace large areas currently used for servicing the £11m turnover events business.

The most significant of these occupations is the spaces behind the theatre known currently as Area 7 which will become dressing rooms and facility space for the Theatre. Area 7 which is at ground level and links directly to the Great Hall houses all the infrastructure for the events business including but not limited to rostra for the main stage, 2000 chairs housed in 45 made to measure cages, 10 cages for tables of various sizes and event signage.

- 5.2 Alternative locations for storage have been investigated and though it may seem that Alexandra Palace has significant amounts of space available an assessment has to be against appropriate space for storing infrastructure of this magnitude and the logistics of moving such equipment on a regular basis. Examples of requirements that the storage space would need to provide are:

- ground level access to the Great Hall and West Hall
- minimum 400 square metres and minimum height 6.5m
- ease of access for forklifts
- ability to support the weight of infrastructure

- 5.3 Following the study of areas currently within Alexandra Palace it was concluded that there was no space that met the specification criteria. Therefore attention turned to creating a new storage unit.

- 5.4 The location identified for development is the space currently occupied by portacabins (used for event security and offices) in the West Yard in front of the North Wall. Following approval from the Board, surveys were undertaken to establish whether this space would be appropriate for a building with the primary purpose of storing heavy event infrastructure.

Following positive indications that a building would be possible APPCT commissioned the Surveyor of the Fabric, Purcell, to carry out a feasibility study, and prepare concept designs of a building which provided storage for the displaced infrastructure, but also provides a multifunctional commercial space (eg. function rooms and roof terrace), support to the North Wall allowing the removal of the raked scaffold shores and incorporated the North West Tower, bringing derelict space back into use.

- 5.5 Once the feasibility study and concept designs were completed they were tested against the draft business case to assess whether the project would be affordable.

As part of the business case an assessment was made to evaluate the impact on the business should the infrastructure be stored off site (not within the perimeter of the Palace itself). The findings were clear that an off-site solution would have a significant impact on the gross margin limiting APTL's ability to continue gift aiding its profits at levels seen in recent years.

However, and more significantly, the assessment identified that the organisation would struggle to win and retain business as the increased cost to clients, turnaround time and loss of flexibility would make us uncompetitive. The business case demonstrated the return on investment and affordability of the project which will be presented to the Board in April.

- 5.6 An ancillary benefit to this project is the opportunity to use the frame of the proposed steel structure to re-support the North Wall currently restrained to the south face by a series of scaffold buttresses which were erected during the 1980's. Though currently deemed stable the buttressing can't continue to be "the long term solution" therefore using the building as the stabiliser will allow for the buttressing to be removed.

Some of the portacabins are at the end of their useful life.

## **6. Principal Proposal**

- 6.1 The proposal will provide a 3 storey steel structure with the basement level and ground floor providing storage space for event infrastructure and the levels above offering opportunity for commercial use including function rooms and a roof terrace though other uses for example office space will also be considered.

The project offers the opportunity to restore the North West Tower and connect it to the new building as well as much needed external restoration repairs both to the Tower and the North Wall.

- 6.2 The Surveyor to the Fabric now working under Kier Construction Limited developed the project brief and objectives further to a stage where a planning application can be made. In developing early options they have developed the elevations and massing of the structure providing the structural solution to support the North Wall and resolve other known site constraints, such as the 1940's underpinning of the Wall.
- 6.3 The current proposal will provide a six level (approximately 3 storey) steel structure with a function suite and roof terrace on the upper levels above the storage units. The structure will require piled foundations and works sequenced to support the North Wall and still provide operational access to the Great and West Halls.

- 6.4 This Project will also enable the opportunity to reform openings to 3 no. windows on the North Wall Elevation. Works also to reform openings to the North West Tower are also planned as well as the external restoration repairs to both the North Wall and the North West Tower (to meet the requirements of the Fabric Maintenance Plan). The new structure will be connected to the North West Tower with an enclosed glass entrance lobby providing an attractive entrance to the function rooms above. There is also opportunity to re-form openings on the existing Tower. The Project also gives a future capability to reconnect the North and West Yard via a platform lift.
- 6.5 Security, separation and external treatments of the project area is currently being discussed as the operational and commercial aspects move into more detailed design. A reduced number of the portacabins will be relocated to the North Yard which will make better operational sense for security and office space will be found within existing accommodation in the Palace.
- 6.6 An initial pre-application meeting was held with London Borough of Haringey on the 18 March 2016 and the proposals received a positive response. They liked the boldness of the new building, the pedestrian linkages, the opportunity to preserve the North Wall in a more structured way and the clearance of the West Yard of the portable buildings.
- 6.7 Purcell will be assisting with a Heritage Statement for the Proposal when the planning and listed building applications are submitted later in the month.
- 6.8 Concept drawings for the proposal can be found attached to this report under Appendix 1. A presentation of these drawings will also be given at the meeting as well as the opportunity to visit the West Yard.

## 7. Milestones

7.1 The Provisional Project Programme is

Completion of feasibility, surveys and developed design	March/April 2016
Consideration by APPCT Board	12 April 2016
Complete Final Design	April/May/June 2016
Seek Planning permission	April 2016
Planning Consent	June/July 2016
Start on Site	July 2016
Completion on site	January 2017
Final fit out complete	February 2017

\*This is subject to further clarification by Kier Construction.

## 8.. Legal Implications

8.1 The Council's Assistant Director of Corporate Governance has been consulted in the preparation of this report, and save as follows, has no comments to make:

- 8.2 As set out in the body of the report, the works require both planning permission and listed building consent, and comments on these issues will follow as part of the report presented to the Board on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2016.
- 8.3 Comments on the procurement of the contractor to take the project forward will also follow as part of the report presented to the Board on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

## **9. Financial Implications**

- 9.1 The Council's Chief Financial Officer has been consulted in the preparation of this report. The main financial implications of this proposal that will need to be considered by the Trust can be summarised as:
- Affordability – once the estimated cost is known the Trust will need to consider the various financing options available in the context of their overall financial position;
  - Prioritisation – how the works and associated costs align with the other competing demands for resources;
  - Business Need – whether the fundamental business need as set out in the Business Case referred to has been demonstrated;
  - Value for Money (VFM) – whether the proposed scheme can be seen to deliver VFM taking into account the apparent immediate need for a solution for the events infrastructure and the associated benefits of improving the visual amenity of the West Yard, the additional space offered and the consequent benefit to the supporting of the existing structure.
- 9.2 Part of establishing the Value for Money case will be consideration of the impact on the costs/ benefits from lesser options given that the proposal delivers substantially more than a solution to the event infrastructure issue.
- 9.3 This report is not proposing action that would in itself have financial implications although the above points will need to be fully considered in a report to the Trust Board.

## **10. Appendices**

Appendix 1 – West Yard Storage Project – Purcell - Concept Design