

project no	7035W	date	2023 11 14
project	Bury College – Transformation, Woodbury	rev	01
reference	Summary project overview for Planning statement		

Rev 01 Additional information relating to the proposed new entrance

Notes

- To assist Mosaic in their initial approach to Planning, we have produced this statement as requested, to provide a project overview.

Site and location

The location of the site is within the existing Woodbury Centre.

The Woodbury Centre is the most visible part of the campus from the adjacent and busy Angouleme Way. Proposals within this report include high quality works to the elevation, visible from Angouleme Way, which will increase the visibility of the building and its associated potential for branding and marketing.

This is located at the northern end of Market Street. The northern aspect of the building faces Angouleme Way. The Woodbury Centre faces the newly constructed Bury College Health & Digital Centre, completed January 2023.



Existing facilities

There are two parts to the refurbishment Works in this application.

- Woodbury Entrance
- Woodbury South elevation

Woodbury Entrance

The existing main entrance into Woodbury is a single storey stone enclose projecting from the brick facade. It is approached in two directions, accessed up a short flight of stairs. It is sited off centre along the east elevation, facing Market Street.

The existing entrance lacks many of the required functions that the College expects of an entrance and reception in one of its most important and heavily utilised buildings. Consideration is also required to the College masterplan and aspiration for an enhanced frontage and branding. Any works would require the addressing of issues including poor connectivity, sparse entrance and reception facilities, and inclusivity issues.

The exiting entrance is a tired looking construction which would benefit from enhancement, improved branding and being made more welcoming.

The entrance doors are modestly sized in the masonry surround, where the associated signage is also relatively small and underplays the presence of the entrance into Bury College. The overall impression is not of a main entrance into a popular and much used building, accessed by teachings staff, student and public alike.

The existing access arrangement for wheelchair users is a ramp offset around the corner of the entrance enclosure. Those users must use a different entrance to everyone else, which does not address forward thinking inclusive provision. For new visitors, once through the doors the entrance area is not spacious. It is also unclear which route should be followed.

Wayfinding and directional signage is poor and cluttered whilst facilities expected within an entrance, such as WCs, are also conspicuous by their absence. The Access route into the ground floor is convoluted. The security gates are set to one side, and there is limited opportunity for direct observation of the security barriers from reception.

Woodbury South elevation

The existing elevation under consideration is to the south wing, facing Market Street. Only a short bottom section of the window serves the ground floor, acting as clerestory windows from inside the building. The rooms which the windows serve are teaching spaces.

The teaching accommodation in the south wing of Woodbury is of a lower quality than the College would wish, primarily due to the lack of natural light, ventilation and views. The brief is to enhance the space and create a better learning environment.

The existing windows are very tall but the majority of the window serves the upper stories. At ground floor level the cill is high within the rooms. The issues of reduced natural light and absence of view are further compounded by the masking of the glazed panes.

Alongside restricting natural light, the above situation restricts any views out, and the opportunity to visually connect with the adjacent social gathering space and landscaped courtyard. The window cill when viewed internally is at approximately 2.3m above the internal floor level.

The rooms served by the windows are classrooms. The absence of natural light and views with reliance upon artificial light makes the rooms feel enclosed, oppressive and is not reflective of the expectations of a quality learning environment. The College is experiencing increasing student numbers. It is envisaged that this trend will continue. High quality teaching space is at a premium, and any cost effective works which can be carried out to improve the current situation is to be considered.

Internal reconfiguration

As part of the Woodbury refurbishment works, it is the intention to address a number of internal configuration issues. This will include reformation of partitions, realignment of corridors, altering the prioritisation of entry and exit points, making routes clearer, improving wayfinding, improving accessibility and inclusivity.

During its lifetime, the development of the building form, function and changes of usage has led to the requirement to reassess the rationale of the main entrance location.

The internal reconfiguration works will improve the logic and simplicity of the internal layout.

Woodbury Entrance

Low key, modest entrance, separate wheelchair access



Unclear routes, cluttered, poor wayfinding



Dated installations, unwelcoming, poor inclusivity

Woodbury South elevation

Limited natural light and ventilation, poor quality teaching space



Sympathetic lowering of cill height, to align with base plinth and reflect the existing north elevation

Key objectives of the project

- The removal of low quality building stock and defunct / outdated services, enabling the introduction of more energy efficient services and plant, and more thermally enhanced window and wall installations, all addressing the Colleges sustainability aspirations.
- To upgrade the FE college estate and to significantly reduce the proportion of FE college estate not fit for purpose or in unsatisfactory condition, ensuring all colleges are excellent places to learn
- To promote optimum space utilisation and a more efficient use of facilities
- To enhance the adjacent and retained parts of Woodbury building.
- To ensure that Woodbury does its part in providing facilities the college needs to support the skills needs of their local labour market
- The upgrading and refurbishment of Woodbury addresses the direction established within the College Masterplan.

- Improve inclusivity
- Improve circulation, routes and wayfinding.
- Enhance the College presence

Design and proposals

Woodbury Entrance

The proposal is to relocate and modernise the main building entrance, moving it from being a subdued low key entrance into one which announces the presence of Bury College and is welcoming to all. The new location is further north along the east elevation. This places the entrance in direct view of the adjacent traffic intersection, and will be immediately apparent to anyone travelling along Angouleme Way.

The relocation of the proposed entrance better serves the changes to the building footprint which have occurred over its lifetime. Changes to the functionality and use of areas have altered the `balance` of the plan, affecting the occupation, intensity of use and circulation needs.

From the existing entrance, almost all building users move north, circulation routes are as a result densely used and congested, travel distances are inefficient.

The proposed entrance location enables more efficient use of the building and circulation. The proposed entrance is centered between the west projecting wings to the north and south, improving circulation logic and wayfinding.

The proposed new entrance integrates and rationalises the routes, enabling wheelchair users to utilise the same entrances and be afforded the use of the same facilities as everyone else. This proposal meets Ofsted and Bury College requirements for security, safeguarding and inclusivity.

Facility provision in the new entrance will be enhanced to provide the functionality expected; clear direction, open reception area, waiting area, W.C.s and security barriers under supervision. The new location offers the opportunity to internally reconfigure the space, providing building users a direct route through to the existing and under utilised central landscaped courtyard.

A further opportunity will be the ability to re-plan and optimise the now defunct space at the original entrance to serve teaching and support facility needs.

Numerous options have been considered in the development of the current preferred proposal.

All were positioned in the same location along the east elevation due to the logic and rationale noted above. The options reviewed considered different sizes of entrance and varieties of materiality, all intending to address the functionality needs whilst mitigating perceived impact to the existing façade.

Comments have been received from Planning relating to the preferred option submitted at that time. To address the comments made, we have produced a further option; 4A. We believe that this latest proposal responds to the Planning commentary as follows;

- To respond to the Planning comment regarding height and visibility of the entrance;
 - We have reduced the height of the entrance. The opaque cladding panels have been removed and replaced with a fully glazed system, enabling view to and appreciation of the existing façade.
- To respond to the Planning comment regarding impact and physical interaction;
 - Other than the removal of a section of masonry at the base of the existing window aperture to form the door, it is the intention to retain the existing window apertures unaltered, allowing for reinstatement in the future if required.
- To respond to the Planning comment regarding development conserving and enhancing the historic;
 - We suggest that the proposed development positively conserves Woodbury, enabling the buildings continued use as a fundamental part of the Bury College estate; sustainable development. The entrance location proposed provides a narrative for the developing evolution of the building and its usage.

- To respond to the Planning comment regarding design, siting, scale and materials;
 - o The rationale for the centralized location in the northern part of Woodbury has been identified earlier. The scale has been redefined to align with and avoid discording with the vertical piers and horizontal stone feature banding. The fully glazed transparent enclosure enables uninterrupted view and appreciation of the new development alongside the existing historic.

An Option 4B was presented to Planning alongside Option 4A. It is felt that Option 4A better addresses the comments from Planning;

- it is not as tall, removing any potential visual impact upon the continuous stone banding above
- it improves the construction detailing, assists waterproofing proposals and avoids awkward detailing interaction with the existing façade
- it delivers the potential of a more satisfactory future reinstatement of the original façade, should it be required.

Please refer to `Woodbury Centre Entrance Options\_4A` for the preferred entrance proposal.

Woodbury South elevation

The proposal is to increase the area of existing fenestration, lowering the existing sill level and installing larger windows. The lowering of the bottom window sill will reflect the size of an adjacent window on that elevation. The new sill level will also align with the top of the existing stone plinth and will appear sensitively considered and appropriate.

The works will avoid any structural installations or intrusive works being required by retaining the existing aperture width and lintel. The view, light and sense of connectivity to the external areas will be improved as a result. The benefit of these works will be to deliver an enhanced learning facility for the College.

Design

Woodbury Entrance

The new entrance is proposed to be formed of two primary materials; glass and aluminium cladding. This will deliver a new light modern look to the more serious and sober masonry facade.

The use of modern materials on a locally important building, has been considered and will be treated sympathetically, aiming to compliment and enhance the existing. The enclosure will largely be made of glass, supported within a curtain walling system. This will provide a much needed openness and light into the internal space.

The signage has been relocated from the outside of the new entrance as shown on the previous proposal. It is now sited within the entrance. The signage will act not only to unequivocally confirm the location of the entrance, but also announce the presence of Bury College. It now achieves this with more sensitivity and reduced impact upon the existing façade.

Internally, the walls will be removed with the existing structural columns retained. Surfaces will be kept uncluttered, soffits high and airy. The route through to the courtyard will be apparent.

There is a need to keep water out of the enclosed space which will require the chasing into the building to insert DPCs which will be done through using existing coursing. To ensure that the approach is reversible; the vertical abutment will need to include enclosing the brick reveals to the window jambs either side of the entrance enclosure.

Woodbury South Elevation

Once the apertures in the external envelope are enlarged, new windows will be required. These will be upvc, to match the form and detail of the existing windows. Glazing used will be solar control glass.

Installations and materials

Elements to be upgraded as part of these Works include;

- Curtain walling;
 - o PPC aluminium frames double glazed with inner pane laminated with 1.5mm interlayers. Low E inner Argon fill and solar control glass outer to achieve g-value of 0.4.
- External entrance doors
 - o Aluminium thermally broken double glazed sliding doors with PPC finish. Automatic operation.
- New main entrance;
 - o PPC aluminium frames double glazed with inner pane laminated with 1.5mm interlayers. Low E inner Argon fill and solar control glass outer to achieve g-value of 0.4.

Landscape (to Woodbury Entrance works)

Refer to Landscape architects information

The proposed layout addresses the project vision for the public realm to the Woodbury Centre entrance. It enhances the entrance, creating an accessible, directional, formal setting which will act visually as a prestigious 'front door' for Bury College.

It brings additional value and functionality in the form of external social space, pedestrian protection, ecological value, aesthetic improvement and potential exhibition space. The layout helps to build on Bury College's developing masterplan of connectivity, enhancing users interaction with college facilities and improving how they travel between them.

It is sensitive to the geometry and heritage of the locally listed building, giving it a setting and reflecting the geometry within the landscape. The incorporation of planting and potential sustainable drainage systems (raingardens) will greatly improve the site's biodiversity and surface water treatment.

The hard landscape materials will be selected to provide a functional, attractive and long term solution to the site which will enable fully accessible use of the building, while enhancing the sense of place. Paving surface will allow flush access routes into the building entrances and upstand edges to main routes will provide guidance and delineation to direct users to the entrances.

The areas of soft landscape are critical to the development of the character of the site. These areas also give the opportunity to enhance ecological value and increase biodiversity levels which will benefit the environment and native wildlife species.

The soft landscape has been broken down into a series of typologies:

- Ornamental grasses and perennials
- Vibrant planting

Planting species will be developed with input from the appointed Ecologist and in line with BREEAM requirements to ensure the external scheme is fulfilling its ecological potential.

In response to initial feedback from Planning, it has been decided to omit the previous proposals for new trees at the new entrance due to the consideration that these would obstruct the view of the façade.