

Summary of Jacobs Wells Baths 1st Stage Feasibility Study Vivid - Neighbourhood Partnership

1. Jacobs Wells Baths is a Grade II listed building built in 1889. It is a building of significant architectural and heritage merit. Bristol City Council own the freehold of Jacobs Wells Baths. The previous tenants, Bristol Community Dance Centre Ltd (BCDC), delivered a 30 year programme of Community Dance from the building. The building is currently on a short term licence to occupy with Artspace Lifespace(ASLS).
2. A feasibility report was commissioned by the Central, Clifton and Harbourside Neighbourhood Partnership to inform the long term future of the building. Vivid's work was delivered over a 4 month period from September 2016. The work involved: a programme of consultation events, research into the current building condition, analysis of maintenance and running costs, exploration of redevelopment options, funding research, liaison with a broad range of stakeholders, some bid writing and the writing of this report. The local community, through the Jacobs Wells Community Hub group, were actively engaged and led on some of the work. ASLS also played an important role, testing uses for the building and helping to gather information regarding the opportunities and constraints associated with the building in its current condition.
3. The building requires significant investment and in particular requires work to the roofs, overhead tanks, stone work and interiors. Water is entering the building. In the short term some work is required to enable the building to continue to be operated by ASLS.
4. In 2015 BCDC developed detailed proposals for the redevelopment of the South Wing. This proposal would have significantly increased the income potential of the building. There are other potential options for the redevelopment of the building that would create additional lettable space.
5. There is strong evidence of demand in the city for dance space, performance space and rehearsal space. There is also a lack of community facilities locally and a growing demand from the local community for space for local activities. In other parts of the city, successful arts venues have been developed from similar buildings demonstrating both demand and viability. There is strong evidence linking the benefits of dance and arts to health and wellbeing. A new purpose built dance facility would of course be a great option, but given the lack of sites, demand for housing and value of land, and lack of strategy for dance in the city it is recommended that Jacobs Wells Baths continue to be prioritised as a centre for dance.
6. The community consultation engaged with 380 people. The drop ins were successful at reaching a broad range of stakeholders and there was a good response to the on-line survey. There is a clear "ask" from stakeholders for the building to be retained and developed as a dance, arts and community facility. Redevelopment for residential or demolition is not supported.
7. The overall cost of the required capital works is not known. The building requires a master plan and a phased approach to renovation. Urgent work followed by Phase 1 repairs to the roof to stop further water ingress. Phase 2 should fully repair or replace the roofs and improve the interior of the building and address some of the access issues. Phase 3 could focus on either the North Wing or the South Wing for redevelopment. Further phases would need to follow. BCC will need to cover the costs for urgent works and contribute to Phase 1 costs. Phase 2 and Phase 3 could be funded through grant funding, trust funding, crowdfunding and loan finance. Details of funding opportunities are detailed in this report. An important potential funder is the Heritage Lottery Fund.
8. A vision for the building has emerged from this first stage feasibility as: ***A vibrant, accessible and inclusive nationally and locally acclaimed hub for dance, performing arts, wellbeing and community development.***
9. In the long term BCC must decide whether to lease or dispose of the building. There are significant risks associated with selling the building. It is the recommendation of this report that BCC seek a partner to take a long lease of the building. There is interest in the building from existing cultural organisations which can be formally explored through the Expression of Interest stage of the Community Asset Transfer process. BCC will need to provide a "dowry" in the region of £250,000.
10. Next steps in summary: BCC to carry out emergency works (asbestos, conditions survey, electrical testing, water), ASLS to secure funding to enable extension of lease, Friends of Jacobs Wells Baths to be set up, Bristol City Council to begin the asset transfer process.

Recommendations (taken from Section 9 of the report)

Action	Detail
1) "Friends Group"	A "Friends of Jacobs Wells Baths" group should be established as a priority. This group should meet monthly and ensure representation from the local community, dance community, and local councillors with BCC committed to attending the meetings. The work of the group would be to oversee the next steps as outlined in this report. Without this, there is a risk that this project will go into drift especially given the limited resources of the local authority at this time. The group should include a "technical team" calling on the experts who have helped so far.
2) Urgent works	BCC must commit to expenditure on urgent works as identified in this report and in the 2012 Building Maintenance report and as identified by ASLS.
3) Short term use of the building	BCC commit a small amount of grant funding (e.g. £5k) to enable ASLS to continue to operate the building (Option SO1) until lease/disposal goes ahead (BCC Culture/Arts dept.). ASLS explore other potential funding streams to support this work and to fund activities within the building starting with Quartet and the Arts Council.
4) Secure funding for further Feasibility Work to better understand building condition and urgent works	Make £5k bid to the Architectural Heritage Fund which will need match funding £5k from BCC (could be in-kind support, emergency works).
5) Apply for Grade II * listed building status and apply for funding for urgent works from Historic England. Get building on the BCC at risk register.	This process will take around 6 months and could enable the building to be put on the national Heritage at risk register. Have already requested BCC to put building on their at risk register.
6) Agree the preferred long term option	BCC to work with the "Friends of Jacobs Wells Baths" group to agree the preferred long term option. In principle it is agreed that BCC will move forward with Option L3 and offer a Community Asset Transfer of the building through invited expressions of interest to ascertain whether an existing organisation has the vision, capacity and capability to take this building on.
7) Begin Asset Transfer Process	Promote through a workshop bringing together interested parties, e.g. held at City Hall, followed by expressions of interest and business plan request from preferred bidder.
8) Ongoing community engagement	Consider applying to the Heritage Lottery for a revenue funded community learning and engagement project linked to heritage and storytelling to build on the good community development work that is already happening.
9) Ensuring the Asset Transfer process is successful	A successful CAT of the building is more likely to happen if BCC commit to investing and providing a dowry/grant to the successful bidder for Phase 1 works. Urgent roof repairs are essential.
10) Fundraising	Begin conversations with Heritage Lottery and other Funders regarding the roof and interior works and redevelopment ideas (Phase 2 + 3 works).