Fleetville Community Centre

Building Project Development Committee

NB 33 Building options

Draft

The proposed new community centre is not inevitable, but this report makes a compelling case for it. It is not compelling because the Trust is seeking external funding for a substantial proportion of the cost. The Trust therefore has to demonstrate that what is proposed is the only viable and correct solution for providing the community facilities which Fleetville deserves.

Five options are presented:

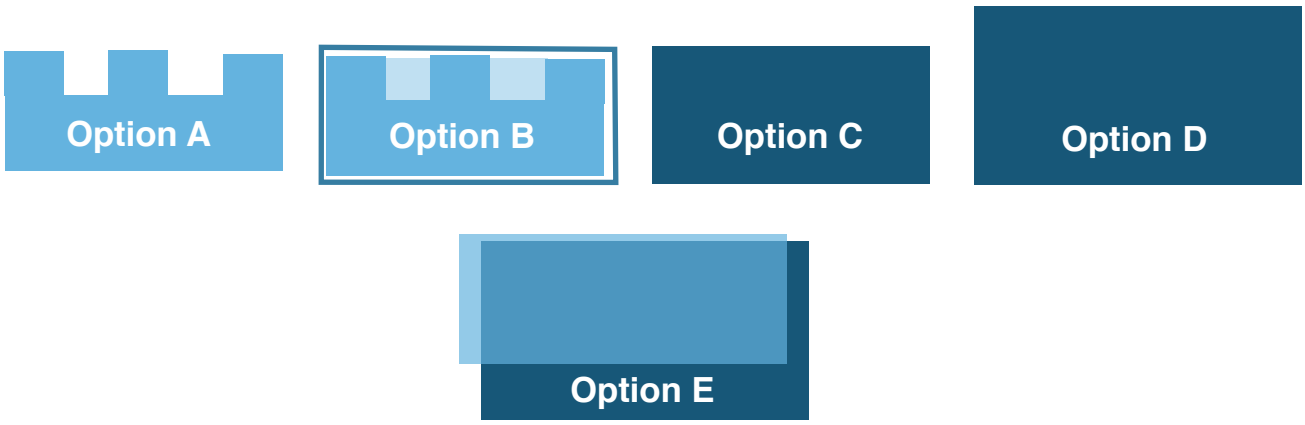
Option A: doing nothing and continuing with the current building indefinitely;

Option B: upgrading the present building;

Option C: demolishing and rebuilding using the current building footprint and with the same number and sizes of spaces;

Option D: demolishing the current building and constructing a new structure with improved number and sizes of spaces;

Option E: demolishing the current building and constructing a new structure with improved number and sizes of spaces, including a second level.



Option A: Doing nothing and continuing with the current building indefinitely.

The minimum option financially and practically is to continue using the current building and the spaces it contains, without considering any improvements. There is a possibility that the present structure can be made to serve Fleetville as a communty centre for some years to come. This option is not, however, a permanent solution, because one or other of the other four options would have to be considered eventually. This was, after all a temporary building erected in

1942 and without proper foundations or insulation, and without modern services conforming to the current standards of a community centre.

Benefits:

Even given this consideration there will be a minimum number of financial and practical benefits:

BENEFIT A1: No expenditure will be required for rebuilding during the lifetime of this Project;

BENEFIT A2: No disturbance will be caused to nearby property owners;

BENEFIT A3: No dis-continuity will be created for hiring groups and other activities;

BENEFIT A4: No extended programme for large-scale fund-raising will be required, or the administration that a substantial project demands.

Disbenefits:

However, it is the disbenefits which will mark option A for more negative consideration, especially considering the determination of the Trustees to improve facilities at the Centre.

DISBENEFIT A1: Indefinite annual costs will be incurred for repairs and maintenance to the building, and those costs will probably increase with time as deterioration becomes more deep-rooted;

DISBENEFIT A2: Indefinite annual costs will be incurred for heating a building with minimal thermal insulation;

DISBENEFIT A3: The proportion of income available for long-term improvements will be restricted by the queue of short-term costs identified above;

DISBENEFIT A4: No practical solutions will be available to alleviate identified issues, which include improved toilet provision, additional circulation space, a lack of modern facilities, shortage of storage space, inappropriate floor area proportions (length and width, and also height) of individual rooms, and the number of meeting spaces required;

DISBENEFIT A5: With no improvements there are fewer opportunities to find new income streams, and assuming present income is currently being optimally generated, the margin of difference between income and actual operating costs will become more narrow.

DISBENEFIT A6: Improvements to the public realm in Royal Road are less likely to be achieved because there will be no new driver project with which to financially and practically attach it;

DISBENEFIT A7: It Ignores a long-term need for replacement, given that nothing lasts forever, and a building without proper foundations and expected in 1942 to have a ten-year life would ordinarily have been replaced long ago.

Summary:

Option A appears to be a low cost option, but what money is saved in the short term will have to be expended in the long term and with greater cost. It also denies the district the improved facilities and opportunities for which it has been waiting for a considerable number of years.

Option B: Upgrading the present building

Next to the do-nothing option, Option B would provide a minumim number of improvements, although most of Option A's dis-benefits would remain in place. So, what could be upgraded without actually replacing the structure? It should be remembered that, without proper foundations, even light-weight new external walls would require a foundation to be incorporated, although insulation would be much improved. Likewise a new roof above the present one would also improve insulation. A new perimeter wall fitted internally would have a dis-benefit in reducing the current floor area. The opportunity of making improvements to the current internal spaces, in floor area and height would be negligable. There could be up to two modest and easily accomplished extensions to the rear of the building, but the cost of this benefit would be high in proportion to the other benefits of this option. The high cost of new external walls and new roof have benefits limited to lower seasonal heating costs, exclusion of damp, but no benefit by increasing the heights of spaces.

Benefits:

As with Option A there will be a minimum number of financial and practical benefits, but given the expenditure required the benefits are not as strong as might be imagined.

BENEFIT B1: relatively small expenditure will be required for construction, mainly the cost of a new external wall with foundations, a new roof, and if chosen, two modest extensions;

BENEFIT B2: as the extensions would fill in semi-enclosed open spaces, each would require one external side, and a new external wall would not be required on three sides of the original space of each semi-enclosed space.

BENEFIT B3: Less disturbance will be caused to nearby property owners, as most of the construction modifications could be undertaken in stages, and there will be no messy demolition;

BENEFIT B4: Little or no dis-continuity will be created for hiring groups and other activities;

BENEFIT B5: The fund-raising programme would be modest, but may not be proportionately easier to achieve, since there could be a greater reliance on low-level income streams which, pound for pound, involve more volunteer effort.

BENEFIT B6: One, or perhaps two, modest additional internal spaces would be created, although with one of them a certain amount of internal re-arrangement would be required to provide access.

BENEFIT B7: Two additional spaces would give the potential of additional revenue, while not significantly increasing running costs.

BENEFIT B8: This option would benefit from installing a new heating system, designed for the new thermally protected building.

Disbenefits:

The dis-benefits are also fairly similar in nature to Option A, and will also fail to meet the aspirations of Trustees, given their determination to strive for a significant improvement over what is possible at present. Given the responses from over one hundred residents in the district it, Option B will still fall short of their aspirations.

DISBENEFIT B1: The cost of providing a new external wall and new roof has to be set against the benefit to be gained, which is limited to reduction in seasonal heating cost and rate of deterioration in the existing structure, as it will be protected. While this sounds like a huge advantage, there are no other benefits against which it could be set unless the additional spaces are incorporated.

DISBENEFIT B2: A new external wall is still a disadvantage to users in feeling a relatively large sum has given little in the way of a visual and stimulating environment, since the internal walls, floors and ceilings of the spaces will be the same and with the same visual and sound resonance, if that is important to the activity being carried out;

DISBENEFIT B3: The proportion of income available for long-term improvements will be restricted by the queue of short-term costs identified above;

DISBENEFIT B4: No practical solutions will be available to alleviate identified issues, which include toilets, circulation space, lack of modern facilities, storage, space proportions (length, width and height) of individual rooms, and, perhaps, the number of spaces required;

DISBENEFIT B5: With no improvements there are fewer opportunities to find new income streams, and assuming present income is currently being optimally generated, the margin of difference between income and actual operating costs will become more narrow.

DISBENEFIT B6: Improvements to the public realm in Royal Road are less likely to be achieved because there will be no new driver project with which to financially and practically attach it;

DISBENEFIT B7: It Ignores a long-term need for replacement, given that nothing lasts forever, and a building without proper foundations and expected in 1942 to have a ten-year life would ordinarily have been replaced long ago.

Summary:

Overall, the benefits of considerig this option are still low when set against the costs involved, given that essentially it is the same building with the same spaces and with no proper foundations.

Option C: Demolition and rebuild on same footprint

This option lays out the possibility of demolishing the existing structure and rebuilding largely on the same footprint, on a single floor, while retaining the existing number of parking spaces and garden area. The design would simplify the layout, and while the number of meeting spaces would not be increased there would be opportunities for creating more satisfying internal arrangements and circulating areas.

Benefits:

BENEFIT C1: The opportunity of starting from an empty plot following demolition;

BENEFIT C2: The benefit of arranging the layout according to current need, including room proportions and optimum room sizes, given the total space available;

BENEFIT C3: Facilities such as storage, toilets, office space and service room can be incorporated more sensibly into the new floor plan;

BENEFIT C4: Ceiling heights can be varied according to need;

BENEFIT C5: Thermal and noise insulation, together with security and air flow will be available to meet current standards.

BENEFIT C6: The aesthetic benefit will be considerable over options A and B

BENEFIT C7: The ongoing running costs may be broadly similar to, or less than option B, but the satisfaction benefits will be significantly improved, since it would be the first option where design provides space, feature, service and ambience options desired rather than imposed.

Disbenefits:

These will differ in options C, D and E from those which have to be considered in options A and B.

DISBENEFIT C1: There will be a period of time when users will need to be found alternative accommodation.

DISBENEFIT C2: This option, and options D and E, has to manage the demolition stage. This will include the removal of the concrete pad on which the present building sits. Excavating foundation trenches while managing the existing tunnels, or pier/pile foundations as an alternative, will be required. This will be a more expensive option than the simple strip foundation of option B.

DISBENEFIT C3: The ongoing running costs may be broadly similar to option B, although, it may be determined that staffing costs will be higher if it is considererd necessary to have a staff presence for all hours of opening. These additional costs would require additional hiring revenue, which would come from per-hour rates, an additional meeting space, target increases in hiring hours (minimising unoccupied hours), creating sustainable alternative revenues, or a mix of the above.

Summary:

This is the first option which would deliver true flexibility in the design of the building, and to create a design as a cohesive whole, rather than being constrained by any existing structure or part structure.

Option D: demolition and rebuild on a larger footprint

While Option C can be considered a safe option with a like-for-like replacement, Option D presumes the need for a larger building, should the evidence suggest a need for more hirable spaces, or the same number of spaces having larger floor areas. Benefits D1 to D7 and dis-benefits D1 to D3 below are the same as for Option C.

Benefits:

BENEFIT D1: The opportunity of starting from an empty plot following demolition;

BENEFIT D2: The benefit of arranging the layout according to current need, including room proportions and optimum room sizes given the total space available;

BENEFIT D3: Facilities such as storage, toilets, office space and service room can be incorporated more sensibly into the new floor plan;

BENEFIT D4: Ceiling heights can be varied according to need;

BENEFIT D5: Thermal and noise insulation, together with security and air flow will be available to meet current standards.

BENEFIT D6: The aesthetic benefit will be considerable over options A and B, and moderately improved over option C.

BENEFIT D7: The ongoing running costs may be broadly similar to option C, but the satisfaction benefits will be significantly improved, since it would be the first option where design provides space, feature, service and ambience options

desired rather than imposed. These can be further improved with the larger footprint of option D.

BENEFIT D8: The building layout may be easier to arrange optimally, since there is a larger overall floor area; and more opportunities for sub-dividing spaces. A larger floor area provides the potential for a larger income balanced against broadly similar operating costs as Option C.

BENEFIT D9: The additional floor area is more likely to accommodate semi-specialist spaces which would otherwise have to share general spaces not specifically geared to any particular kind of activity, such as a youth base or for specific arts.

BENEFIT D10: The site footprint available for the building could be increased substantially by projecting the front part of it over the current parking spaces, which would be left in position (see also Disbenefits D6).

Disbenefits:

DISBENEFIT D1: There will be a period of time when users will need to be found alternative accommodation.

DISBENEFIT D2: This option, as well as options C and E, has to manage the demolition stage. This will include the removal of the concrete pad on which the present bulding sits. Excavating foundation trenches while managing the existing tunnels, or pier/pile foundations as an alternative, will be required. This will be a more expensive option than the simple strip foundation of option B.

DISBENEFIT D3: The ongoing running costs may be broadly similar to, or slightly more than option C, depending on the difference in size. As with option C, because it will be a new building, staffing costs will be higher if it is considererd necessary to have a staff presence for all hours of opening. These additional costs would require additional hiring revenue, which would come from per-hour rates, an additional meeting space, target increases in hiring hours (minimising unoccupied hours), creating sustainable alternative revenues, or a mix of the above.

DISBENEFIT D4: A larger footprint will price up the capital cost.

DISBENEFIT D5: Occupying a larger footprint reduces the space potentially available for a children's playground area or a community garden.

DISBENEFIT D6: Benefit D10 (a new building brought closer to the front site boundary) will depend on any planning decision which limits the building line to that of the current building.

Summary:

Options C and D can be directly compared, since the same approaches to the design will be broadly similar for both. It would therefore be a question of whether there are sufficient demands to justify the larger of the two options.

Option E: demolition and rebuild with a second level incorporated

This option is available to consider if the ambition of our requirements exceeds the internal space achievable on a single level. Informal indications from the council have left us with the possibility of adding a second floor to at least part of the structure, and given that some of the space below the ground floor has already been removed, the notion of developing a sub-ground floor has been accepted as possible, perhaps catering for noisy activities. If the sub-ground floor was given over exclusively to parking this might not be to the exclusion of a second level above ground. The major consideration, as always, is that the more which is excavated and the more which is built, the greater will be the project cost.

Benefits:

BENEFIT E1: The opportunity of starting from an empty plot following demolition;

BENEFIT E2: The benefit of arranging the layout according to current need, including room proportions and optimum room sizes given the total space available;

BENEFIT E3: Facilities such as storage, toilets, office space and service room can be incorporated more sensibly into the new floor plan, with the possibility of duplicating certain facilities. Toilets and storage, for example, could be provided on both levels.

BENEFIT E4: Ceiling heights can be varied according to need;

BENEFIT E5: Thermal and noise insulation, together with security and air flow will be available to meet current standards.

BENEFIT E6: The aesthetic benefit will be considerable over options A and B, and the overall design opportunities could become increasingly more bold through options C, D and E.

BENEFIT E7: The ongoing running costs may be broadly similar to option D, but the satisfaction benefits will be improved further over option D.

BENEFIT E8: It could improve the building layout since there is a larger overall floor area. A larger floor area provides the potential for a larger income balanced against broadly similar operating costs as option D.

BENEFIT E9: The additional level would off opportunities to separate spaces of different sizes or specialisms, or separate quiet spaces from noisy spaces.

BENEFIT E10: The site footprint available for the building could be increased substantially by projecting the front part of it over the current parking spaces, which would be left in position (see also disbenefits D10).

BENEFIT E11: A second sub-ground floor level could provide space for additional parking spaces, with all of the accommodation on the ground and first floors.

Disbenefits:

DISBENEFIT E1: There will be a period of time when users will need to be found alternative accommodation, as in options C and D.

DISBENEFIT E2: This option, and option D, has to manage the demolition stage. Option E is a more complex demolition stage, since, inevitably, more spoil would need to be removed from the site. But option E also covers the possibility of not utilising a sub-ground floor at all, and having all accommodation on a ground and first floor.

DISBENEFIT E3: The ongoing running costs may be broadly similar to option D, although, as with options C and D, staffing costs will be higher if it is considererd necessary to have a staff presence for all hours of opening. These additional costs would require additional hiring revenue, which would come from per-hour rates, an additional meeting space, target increases in hiring hours (minimising unoccupied hours), creating sustainable alternative revenues, or a mix of the above.

DISBENEFIT E4: A larger footprint will price up the capital cost, with a decision to have more than one level, no doubt increasing the capital cost disproportionately than increasing floor area on a single level.

DISBENEFIT E5: As with option D occupying a larger footprint reduces the space potentially available for a children's playground area or a community garden.

DISBENEFIT E6: Benefit E10 will depend on any planning decision which limits the building line to that of the current building.

DISBENEFIT E7: The floor area of a second level, whether above or below – or both – would be compromised by the need to accommodate stairways and landings on both (or all) floors, and a lift.

DISBENEFIT E8: If the additional floor level is a sub-ground floor, the cost rises considerably, because of the need for excavation, removal and deposition of large volumes of spoil, and tanking the external walls below ground level, all of which incur cost.

DISBENEFIT E9: a larger footprint with a second level as a first floor may be a riskier planning option than one with a second level below ground floor; and yet it is the latter which has a greater cost.

DISBENEFIT E10: Additional car parking is not proportional in benefit to the current space devoted to it. Presently all parking is in a single line opening directly from the back of the public footpath. Additional lines of cars would require both an entry and exit route, and a manouvreing lane between lines 1

and 2 and after line 3 (it is assumed that the site width will not accommodate further lines).

Summary:

While all other options consider adaptations or new structures on a single level, this is the only one which offers the possibility of other levels; either a full or partial first level, or a full or partial sub-ground level, or a combination of both. The determination will be, as with all other decisions, a question of justification on capital and maintenance grounds.