

Former Beecroft Art Gallery Building Consultation Responses with additional Comments - APPENDIX 2

Option Selected	Comments Supplied
Option 1: Retain the premises	Use space for artists' studios - with an area where they can show their works. The studios should be for new artists; and studios should only be available for a limited period at a time - possibly a year or six months - to enable as many artists as possible to be able to access the facilities
Option 1: Retain the premises	Walter Beecroft's vision for the site as 'for the promotion of the study of art, music and literature' must be maintained. Perhaps something similar to Southend BID could be set up in the area, based at Cliff's or Hamlet Court Road, to boost this area as a centre for the arts. This could provide funding for the repair and maintenance of what should be a listed building and set the area up to rival Leigh as a mixed arts centre.
Option 1: Retain the premises	<p>As you say the building is an asset in the conservation area, it would be preferable for a period property like this to stay, and stay as a public space in some shape of form for the residents of the area to enjoy. This is an over developed, deprived area of Southend that can definitely do without another residential development.</p> <p>We want to be 'city of culture', don't we?! Selling off the building to developers surely goes against the very fundamentals of this important & worthwhile concept & public legacy.</p>
Option 1: Retain the premises	<p>Since reading about it in the "Echo" I have come to the conclusion that it should be used to display the cultural history of Southend and area: historical aspects (Saxon king?), Victorian age with royal visitors and first swimmers, the beginning of railway links and - with them - the masses of working class visitors. Part of the exhibition could be devoted to, for example, "The secret history of Southend-on-Sea" as described in the book of that name by Dee Gordon, 2014.</p> <p>These are only my initial thoughts on the subject, but I am convinced that, once the building has been refurbished, it could be put to good use and play a significant role in Southend and area's new image.</p>

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Option 1: Retain the premises	<p>My alternative suggestion is if possible to retain the property and the land, I know very little of the history of the building which for many years has been the Beecroft Art Gallery. Although I realise many years ago, the property is an imposing property, unlike most of the other properties within the area.</p> <p>I know from various sources that the building was purchased by a Mr Beecroft who I understand was a Solicitor, for the housing of an art collection /gallery and if I understand correctly the property together with the art collection is/was administered by the Council on behalf of the Beecroft Trust and the residents of the Borough.</p> <p>The property is a large imposing building on a substantial area of ground and stands in a very prominent position in Westcliff overlooking the Thames, opposite the Cliffs Pavilion. With good access to Westcliff Rail Station. Therefore if marketed properly the venue would attract businesses, for conferences from outside the borough.</p> <p>I accept that possible parts of the building might now have some structural problems and will require a lot of work/money spent on the property but the property of this size and design and in this location does have a lot of potential.</p> <p>There is a property located on the London Road (A 13) which was empty for many years, between Hamlet Court Road and the Cricketers Public House, the property possible suffered from the same problems. This property has now been repaired and restored and is now being used for residential purposes.</p> <p>Therefore the property which is the subject of this correspondence could possibly be repaired and restored, together with any of the internal decorations, once the repairs have been completed, the rooms located within the property could be advertised for council functions and conferences together with catering facilities.</p> <p>However if the property is beyond repair, the property could be demolished and a replica property built, maintaining the Beecroft name and then used as mentioned above and below.</p> <p>I fully understand that there would be a substantial cost involved, possible funding could be accessed via the Lottery and via other grants mentioning the age local history and the design of the property.</p>
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	<p>May I refer you to an item Page 1 of the Southend Standard 10 July 15 with the heading Pier repair plan will cost £1.5m Therefore I believe the money should also be found to repair or replace the property which was the former Beecroft Art Gallery.</p> <p>If space allows, have Arts and Crafts centre, together with a small cafe offering hot and cold meals, the cafe could be located to the front of the property, on the ground floor of the building, to be operated by an independent provider. The cafe could also supply the catering facilities for any conferences or council functions.</p> <p>The cafe will also attract the people many of whom are residents who are walking along the cliffs. I would also like to see in the entrance hall a plaque with the history of the property.</p> <p>The property could carry the name, The Beecroft Business and Community Centre thereby retaining the name and therefore the link with the original property owner, Mr Beecroft.</p> <p>However if the property is sold and demolished and flats are built, then further problems will then arise with the additional infrastructure required, together with school places, doctors, and long term vehicle parking.</p>
Option 2a: Sell the site as it is without additional outlay or cost	No more residential conversions. They are never fit for purpose and there are inadequate jobs in the area.
Option 2b: Sell the site with Planning Consent for residential conversion	Sell with planning consent and put the money towards the Cliffs Museum project (so long as this can meet the aims of the trust)
Option 3: Alternative Proposal	<p>A coffee shop with free bookshop and performance area. The coffee shop could be used to give paid work experience to young people who wish to get into the catering industry. The free bookshop would follow the example that ran in Basildon town centre and would be staffed by volunteers and receive book donations, with the books given away free or for a voluntary donation.</p> <p>The performance area would cover poetry, book readings, rap and acoustic music performances, with</p>

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	<p>preference given to local artists. Artworks could be exhibited across the entire site and could exhibit graffiti / street styles not catered for within the new Beecroft site. This performance space would give the chance for new acts to showcase their talents on the first step towards playing venues like the Cliffs Pavilion opposite.</p> <p>This use of the building would fulfil Walter Beecroft's wishes for the promotion of the study of art, music and literature.</p>
Option 3: Alternative Proposal	Sell the site with the purposes to limit development into a hotel again. The Southend 'offer' has improved dramatically in recent years but quality and period buildings are rare enough and could definitely be developed into a boutique hotel for Southend - a niche underdeveloped market locally.
Option 3: Alternative Proposal	Turn it into a shelter for the homeless
Option 3: Alternative Proposal	Retain the building but use it for something else art related. Creative businesses or artist studios would provide an income.
Option 3: Alternative Proposal	Incubator facility for parts of the new museum project for the cliffs bandstand site.
(No option selected)	Demolish the premises and rebuild as an artist's studio. The light at the Old Beecroft is superb and it is ideally situated. We have in the town many accomplished artists who gladly give their time to train younger up-coming artists and who would value this facility greatly.
(No option selected)	There are numerous artists in Southend and I would suggest that some would be happy to have purpose built room in which to have studios or give art lessons. If the price per unit could be kept to a reasonable rate it would at least give them the opportunity to earn from what is after all an art venue. The rent being paid albeit a slow amount of revenue could go towards the buildings refurbishment. Art clubs, in particular Southend Art Club which I belong to had a keen interest in the building until quite recently and could

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	<p>consider using it for art exhibitions. I do not have enough knowledge of property to suggest whether my suggestion would be a viable option but would like to think it is considered. If the above is not considered viable, whatever happens if it goes for sale, nothing should be done in the way of residence without adequate parking being made available due to the strict parking restrictions in the area and other residents should be considered.</p>
(No option selected)	<p>We would comment as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We are concerned about a conflict of interest with the Trustees being the Council and decisions must only be in the best interests of the Trust and its objectives. Such a conflict could lead to judicial review. 2. If there is no other suitable use for the building by the Trust we can see that disposal is a viable alternative, raising funds for the Trust to further its objectives. However, the use of such funds should not in itself create a conflict of interest, for example funding Council owned assets in anything other than a way that fairly meets the Trusts objectives and represents best use of the Trusts funds. 3. We consider that attempts to secure planning consent before disposal are fraught with danger and potential conflict of interest. Therefore the site should probably be sold as it stands. We would like to see a good and appropriate new use such as hotel/guest house or residences, giving vitality back to the site. 4. A primary concern is for the building to be retained largely in its present form and appearance, making an important contribution to the conservation area with a suitable use as described above. It is apparent that the building needs some structural repair but this need not preclude its re-use in its present form (allowing for some reasonable internal modernisation) even if this requires partial re-building to match the existing external appearance. 5. We would fundamentally disagree with any sale that would lead to an acceptance by the Council of an enlarged building on the plot, for example of increased number of stories that would harm the conservation area. Any acceptance of increased building height on this corner plot, as has been allowed on many sites throughout the borough, would not be acceptable and in an area of conservation designation, would be contrary to the written advice of English Heritage.