

Appendix B: Options Analysis

Each of the options under consideration carries with it a number of pros and cons as well as inter-related dependencies and impacts. A decision on the future of the museum and the collection is a complex issue which requires all implications to be considered. For this reason the analysis of each of the options is shown as a SWOT analysis to present all related issues associated with each one.

The options being considered are:

- 1) Retention of the collection within the museum building at West Park including temporary relocation whilst refurbishment works are carried out on the museum building to ensure it is fit for purpose.
- 2) Permanent relocation of the collection to the Old Sunday School
- 3) Permanent relocation of the collection to the Silk Museum

It should be noted that both options 2 and 3 would still require an alternative plan and resources to repurpose the museum building in West Park.

Option 1

Retention of the collection within the museum building at West Park including temporary relocation whilst refurbishment works are carried out on the museum building to ensure it is fit for purpose.

The option for redisplay of the collection at West Park museum primarily looks at additional space to provide WC and education facilities. However, key to the success of a refurbished museum is also dependent on repair of the building fabric, upgrading of mechanical and electrical systems to improve the environmental conditions of the space, and rationalisation of the collections on display.

This option would involve building a modest extension to the current building to provide Sanitary and education facilities, new heating and electrical systems, repair of building fabric and improved environmental control.

The focus of the displays would be on Marianne Brocklehurst and her travels (including the Egyptology collection). It is proposed that the Tunnicliffe paintings would be relocated to the Silk Museum.

SWOT Analysis

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully respects the heritage – the museum was built to house the collection. The museum was designed and built to be within the Park. • Quality of some aspects of the collection • Suitability – the building and the core collection are a good match. • Distinctiveness – mini museum in a park and strong ‘sense of place’. • Strong core of support amongst volunteers and other local people. 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Park Museum requires capital investment to make it fit for purpose (see Purcell proposals). • West Park Museum is remote from the rest of Macclesfield’s museum offer. • Low visit numbers (5,537 in 2016, including learning visits). • Low footfall in the street; extent of crossover between park users and museum visitors has not been tested, but there’s unlikely to be high positive correlation. • Current displays detract from the visitor experience – remediable (see Purcell proposals) • Little learning and ancillary space – remediable to some extent (see Purcell proposals) • Separate premises and operational costs, as compared to consolidating with one of the other museums.
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To tell the story of the Brocklehursts, particularly Marianne, alongside ‘her’ collection in ‘her’ building. • Visit numbers can be improved and improved facilities will assist this. • Ancient Egypt and local history are now part of school curriculum – this is both. • Once displays and interpretation are improved, creating a charged offer for specialist groups as well as for schools’ visits. • Creation of flexible space. • Relocating the Silk Heritage Trust’s collections would enhance the Silk Museum’s offer. Charles Tunnicliffe studied in the building when it was the School of Art and Design and so would make a fitting repository for his work. • Eligible for HLF funding and potentially Arts Council England. Other Trusts and Foundations could be considered but need to be explored. • Park setting offers greater opportunity for integration of the offer and audience development. 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dilapidations to fabric and poor heating: present risks to the building and the collection – remediable (see Purcell proposals). • Premises and operational costs will remain, post restoration and redisplay • Although visit numbers could be improved, these are unlikely ever to be above 8,000-10,000. • Changes to HLF programmes increases competition for reducing resources.

Option 2

Permanent relocation of the collection to the Old Sunday School

Currently, the Old Sunday School (Heritage Centre) serves various purposes but it is not utilised to its full potential. The survival of the building is largely dependent on financial support from the Council and voluntary work.

The Silk Heritage Trust is exploring the potential to make an HLF grant for capital and revenue works, which will present significant opportunity; the preparation of an application will require an architectural design, costed capital works together with activity and business plans to demonstrate the financial sustainability of the proposed scheme; this process will focus the project's development.

As part of the ongoing Macclesfield Heritage Asset Regeneration Plan (HARP), it was recognised that there is opportunity to brand the building to maximise its prominent location and increase visibility in the context of the proposed cinema and leisure development off Churchill Way. The opportunities to develop an independent 'food market' offer on the ground floor have been identified and this is currently being explored by the Silk Heritage Trust, with a view to its possible development. The basement and ground floor have recently been advertised for lease with proposals sought from commercial operators.

In November 2017, more vulnerable items from West Park Museum were temporarily relocated to the ground floor of the Old Sunday School. Although the spatial fit can accommodate these items, the addition of the West Park Collection only adds to an already incoherent experience, with neither the Brocklehursts nor Egyptology having any historic links to the building.

SWOT Analysis

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential operational cost savings as compared to display at West Park Museum. • Visit numbers to Old Sunday School higher than to West Park Museum, but purpose for these visits are mixed because the offer is varied. • Footfall in this area of the town higher than around West Park. • Under current arrangements, there is plenty of learning space in the building, but not adjacent to where the Egyptology is currently displayed. 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some spaces in Old Sunday School do not lend themselves to display of this collection. • Museum elements of Old Sunday School are weak. They require a major refresh and, eventually, relocation to Silk Museum (see below). • Content of current displays poor match with this collection. • Other uses of Old Sunday School, now and proposed, are not compatible with housing the Brocklehurst collection. • Current offer at Old Sunday School confused, needs rationalising rather than being made still more eclectic.
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhances visitor offer in a part of the town with a regeneration focus. 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to repurpose or mothball West Park Museum. • Repurposing will require capital investment and, in most situations, continuing running costs. • Opposition from volunteers and other locals. • The Trust's new plans to seek to let the ground floor and basement of the Old Sunday School would eventually impact on the display of the collection in these areas. However, at this stage we do not know the detail of the Trust's plans, timescales nor how they will progress.

In the context of the long-term sustainability of the Trust and potential operational changes for Old Sunday School, the Old Sunday School is not recommended as anything more than a temporary location for West Park Museum's artefacts. Other options recommended in the HARP may offer more sustainable solutions with greater regeneration impact.

Option 3 Permanent relocation of the collection to the Silk Museum

The Silk Museum has been used as a museum since 1994 as part of four sites managed by the Macclesfield Silk Museum Trust. The Silk Heritage Trust is currently undertaking public consultation to inform planning for the Silk Museum's future delivery, which presents significant opportunity for the Museum's development. The Silk Heritage Trust has expressed enthusiasm to explore the potential for a Story of Macclesfield Museum to tell the wider story of Macclesfield's heritage. The collection at West Park would be a suitable addition to this.

Some of the more vulnerable items from the West Park Museum collection have already been relocated temporarily to the Silk Museum. However, if this arrangement were to be extended or made permanent, alterations would be required to the space to ensure conditions were suitable. Should relocation remain temporary then these alterations would be minimal. This would involve; the existing mechanical ventilation to the roof be overhauled with new external cowls provided and an automated operating system provided; the existing windows and fire door to the exhibition room be overhauled to include UV protection and that the exhibits be displayed in suitable sealed exhibition cases.

As with the West Park Museum option, it is proposed that the Silk Heritage Trust's collections including the Tunnicliffe and Law and Order exhibitions be displayed separately elsewhere in the museum allowing the Trust to advertise a major temporary exhibition based on the Brocklehurst's prior to its rehousing in the refurbished West Park.

Should this form a permanent relocation, it is proposed that this would take place as part of a major refurbishment of the museum that was recommended in the Macclesfield Heritage Asset Regeneration project. This would involve complete reordering of the museum. In addition, a suitable alternative use for the building at West Park would need to be identified and resourced.

SWOT Analysis

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First floor gallery, currently used for temporary exhibitions, would provide suitable display space for the Egyptology. • Silk Museum has learning/activity space and other facilities. • Displaying the Brocklehurst collection at the Silk Museum would help to consolidate the overall museum offer. • Displaying the Brocklehurst collection at the Silk Museum would help to diversify the offer at the Silk Museum, which is currently rather specialist. • If the Macclesfield story were also told well at the Silk Museum, rather than poorly at the Old Sunday School, the whole museum offer would be consolidated at the Silk Museum and adjacent Paradise Mill. This would give the Silk Museum broader appeal. • Footfall in this area of the town higher than around West Park. • Potential operational costs savings as compared to display at West Park Museum. 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Silk Museum offer is currently charged whereas West Park Museum and the Old Sunday School are free to 'drop in' visitors. Displaying the Egyptology at first floor would inevitably place it beyond the pay perimeter. The Macclesfield story would also become charged unless these displays were close to the entrance and the pay perimeter was placed beyond. • The Silk Museum would lose its temporary exhibition space. • The museum would no longer have a specialist focus on the silk industry. • Significant capital investment required to achieve required changes.
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidating the museum offer at the Silk Museum, thereby diversifying the offer, has the potential to attract more visitors to the museum. However,. • As the Silk Museum is charged, if the net effect were more visits earned income would rise and improve the Trust's financial sustainability. • Relocating the Macclesfield story to the Silk Museum would open up new options for use of the ground floor of the Old Sunday School with the potential to improve the Trust's financial sustainability (see further HARP report). 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The roof at the Silk Museum requires substantial repair; the suitable gallery space is immediately below the roof. The Silk Museum belongs to the Silk Heritage Trust and the Brocklehurst collection to Cheshire East Council. • the loss of the temporary gallery space would impact adversely on visit numbers • Charged entry will deter some visitors. • Silk Museum name/brand will arguably be in-appropriate, but as Macclesfield's heritage is so strongly linked with silk, this is unlikely to be a big issue. • Need to repurpose or mothball West Park Museum. • Repurposing will require capital investment and, in most situations, continuing running costs. • Opposition from volunteers and other members of the local community.