Welcome to the Plumstead Library Public Consultation

Creating a new community asset for all

29th June 2017
The Project

Plumstead is a key focus for the Council’s regeneration work moving forward. With a vibrant high street and diverse local community, the Council is keen to use its assets locally as a catalyst for the renewal of the area that will deliver a more welcoming and enhanced public realm, a better retail offer and great local amenities.

Alongside improved management of the area, the multimillion pound library and leisure centre project represents a real statement of intent to deliver a “Better Plumstead” for local people against a backdrop of significant cuts to Council budgets in recent years. Royal Borough of Greenwich

The scheme will preserve the historic character of the original 1903 building. The existing library facilities will be greatly improved, with a new café to open within the existing building; to the south of the site a brand new extension will house leisure functions including a badminton court and gym. At the heart of the project sits a new level access entrance and social space. The original library will be transformed into a new public centre for the local community.

The Site

Situated at the eastern end of Plumstead High Street Plumstead Library stands as a prominent civic building adjacent to the Police Station. Built in 1903, and designed by Frank Sumner, the library was one of the first to receive funding from the philanthropist Andrew Carnegie.

The site is a 10-minute walk from Plumstead Station, and has access to numerous bus services along the High Street. In 2019 the Elizabeth Line will open at the neighbouring stations Woolwich and Abbey Wood, providing access into central London in just 19 minutes.

Top
Plumstead Library as seen from Plumstead High Street
Middle
Plumstead Urban Framework: Zones of Work (RBG)
Bottom
Existing Location Plan for Plumstead Library

Peabody H2 Sites (930 units)
Abery Street Car Park
Bannock Primary School
Plumstead Fire Station
Bannockburn
Residential
Police Station
Ex-Warehouse Leisure Centre
Station Arrival
Sorting the Severance
High Street Focus
Civic Cluster
History of the Site
“The Carnegie Library”

Carnegie Library
Andrew Carnegie, the famous philanthropist, provided funding for the construction of many public libraries across the UK during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and Plumstead was one of the first.

In 1904 Plumstead Library was completed and opened to the public. Spread across 2 floors, the library provided an adult, children’s and lending library on the ground floor, and a reference room and librarians lodge on the 1st.

A few years after completion several local artists kindly produced a series of frescos to the 1st floor reference room. They were the first of their kind offered to a public library. Their subject matter explored the history, present and future of the book. Later in 1919 a museum was opened on the 1st Floor adjacent to the Reading Rooms.

1936 Extension
In 1936 the library was extended to the southern end of the site. A new children’s library was placed within a single storey extension that also doubled up as a lecture hall, providing a flexible space for the community. Externally the building followed the vertical rhythm of the original building, and a new staff outhouse was built.

Grade II Listing
In 2016 the original 1904 library was listed by Historic England but the 1936 extension was not included. As a prime example of a early 20th Century civic building it was listed for the following reasons:

- Architectural interest: an impressive principal elevation, well suited to the improving nature of the building, and built from quality materials with good detailing and workmanship that survives well overall;
- Plans: the good survival of a series of well-articulated spaces planned around a central hall;
- Interiors: there is plaster detailing and good-quality joinery throughout, with parquet flooring and terrazzo in many areas;
- Historic interest: as one of the earliest Carnegie-funded libraries, designed to be part of a civic ensemble.
New Functions
The Future Library

New Functions
As part of the improvements to the library, a series of new spaces will be incorporated into the existing building and its new extension.

- Brand new leisure facilities will sit alongside new multi-functional spaces, public toilets and a café for the public's enjoyment.
- Existing library functions will continue, with an increase of IT desks; and new areas are created for the public to either read a new best seller, or sit quietly and watch the world go by.
- Brand new leisure facilities will sit alongside new multi-functional spaces, public toilets and a café for the public's enjoyment.

Key Moves:
The key approach to the building's design has been to create a truly accessible building, so that each and every member of the local community may enjoy the new functions. In order to do so the following moves have been made:

1. A new level entrance is created on Gutter Street to provide access for all.
2. Improved Library facilities will continue to run within the Plumstead High Street area of the building, where they have done for the past 113 years.
3. New Leisure facilities will be housed within the new extension in order to create the most suitable space for the active members inside.
4. A new Café and Social Space (either side of the new entrance) will create the building communal heart of the building.

The Arrangement:
With the new development comes the re-opening of spaces previously inaccessible by the public. Much of the 1st Floor will be transformed into new multi-functional spaces, and the new extension houses the proposed Mountain, a new social space for the community that can be everything from a place to meet friends, through to a film festival movie screening.

Top Centre
- Axonometric diagram explaining the arrangement of functions throughout the old and new parts

Middle Centre
- The key moves for the project

Bottom Centre
- All locations within the proposals, Plumstead Library, and their proportional size
New Functions

Proposed Interior

A key driver behind the redesign of Plumstead Library is to make it accessible both in terms of physical access into the building, but also to provide a building open to all in the local community.

The new entrance, Mountain and Cafe form a beating heart of the redevelopment. With Leisure facilities to the left as you enter, and library to the right. The new stairs within the mountain, and new lift, will allow all to access every corner of the building.

Flexibility has been another key driver. New spaces will provide opportunities for a variety of activities, the mountain can be transformed into a number of functions, and the refurbishment of the Triplets and Vault on the 1st floor provide a space for multiple uses.

Key Spaces:

Adjacent are interpretations of the type of spaces that will be provided within the complete building once open.

Listed Building Interior

Many of the Listed Building’s original features are still present, and in relatively good condition. In order to respect the original building’s character, all features will be cleaned, painted and if necessary made good where possible. This will include: Skirting, Picture Rails, Cornicing, Ceilings, Walls, Floors and Stairs. Below are the initial ideas for the interior design of these areas.

New Extension Interior

The new extension will respect the original building by continuing to use natural durable materials throughout the interior. Wood, seamless and rubber will all help to create a robust finish for the community to use time and time again, in a multitude of functions. Below are the initial ideas for the interior design of these areas.

Ground Floor

First Floor
The Local Character
Plumstead expanded greatly during the early 20th century. Much of the development at the time was for new residential developments that surround Plumstead High Street. As a result the surrounding area to the library is predominantly 2 storey terrace housing, with a small collection of other notable buildings, such as the Police Station and the Warehouse to the southern end of the site.

In order to maintain a contextual extension, both in terms of the local character and the existing Listed Library building, the proposed massing takes reference from the following neighbouring characteristics:

A. Articulated Urban Form
The streets that run off Plumstead High Street continue the repetitive small domestic scale of building.

B. Pitched Roofscapes
The predominantly residential area is made up of 2 storey houses with a variety of pitched roofs. Including double gable, mono pitch and hipped roofs.

C. Large Windows, Small Subdivision
Much of the local character, including the library, have windows that are subdivided into multiple smaller elements.

The Proposed Extension
Continuing the key characteristics of the local area, there is an opportunity to create a contemporary extension to the existing building, whilst maintaining a sympathetic relationship with the Listed Building.

It is important that the new extension continues the design of the original building, but in a contemporary manner.

The proposed form of the new extension follows these key principles:

1. Articulated Spaces
The existing building is made up of a series of spaces, each one specifically designed according to the function within. Their individuality is expressed further by the varying treatment to the façades.

2. A Variety of Roofscapes
Each individual space on the 1st floor expresses its roof through a combination of different pitched roofs. The librarian’s lodge follows a domestic pitch, whereas the Triplets subdivides its roof into 3 identical small pitches.

These principles are then continued through into the massing of the extension.

3. Create New Articulated Spaces
Each new function occupies an individual space, much like the existing building. They are then stacked on top of each other, prioritising the higher spaces to be furthest away from the listed building.

4. Roofscapes in Keeping With The Local Character
A new, contemporary, collection of roofs are created as part of the extension. Here the design not only provides a variety of roofs, it is also reflective to the local context in order to reduce any visual impact as much as possible.

5. The Proposal
By learning from the listed building, and the surrounding local character, the proposed extension is a high quality, modern building, with a mass that is broken down in response to the urban grain.
Material Design
“The Old and New Library”

1 - Glazing
Much of the glazing to the listed building has been placed in order to get indirect light into the spaces, as this is a more enjoyable light to read under. On the 1st floor many spaces functions did not require windows, such as the original reading room on the 1st floor.

The new extension follows suit, and the proposal looks to use windows where required, but to orientate them towards indirect light sources. For instance the new social space, “The Mountain” requires no direct view out, and the “Big Room” will benefit from indirect light.

In addition the proposal will look to reintroduce skylights to the “Vault” and “Triplet” spaces, to return much of their original character.

2 - Continuing The Band
In order to tie both new and old collection of spaces, the original limstone band will be continued around the new extension in a new brick pattern, grouping the building as one.

Materials
Reflecting the rich material palette of the original building, the new extension will provide a contemporary re-imaging through the use of high quality materials.

Form
The proposed redevelopment of Plumstead Library into a multi-functional Library/Gym/Community centre combines the multitude of historical features of the Grade II Listed Building, with a contemporary extension that adds to the vitality of the area. The design's form seeks to achieve the following:

Compliment the Grade II Listed Building's scale by being relative of the existing height.

The scale and mass is broken down to continue the rhythm of the existing building, and honour the neighbouring residential urban scale.

Continuing the decorative bands around the new extension unifies the new and existing buildings into one.

The setting back of the new glazed entrance highlights the division line between the listed and the new.

Relationship Between New and Old
The proposed material of the extension is directly taken detailing found along the listed building facade, in order to create a sympathetic and complimentary extension.

Diagrams 1 - 2
Detail of glazing and the continuation of the limstone band around the new extension.

Middle Top
Proposed Materials, compared to Existing

Middle Bottom
The proposed relationship of forms of the existing and the extension

Bottom
Relationship of Old and New details

New Extension Facade Detail

Grade II Listed Facade Detail

Detailed Brick Cornicing Detail

Red Brick with a soft finish

Decorative Bands

Existing Brick/Stone/Glass

New Waterstruck Brick

Brick Pattern

New Glazing

Existing Brick Facade (bottom)

Example of Waterstruck Bricks (bottom)

Example of Flush Glazing Detail (top)

Example of a Glazed Entrance (bottom)

Example of a Brick Pattern Band (bottom)
The Proposal - The Building
“Tying the Spaces Together”

Proposed Elevations
The following elevations show the overall composition of the proposed extension, in context with the Listed Building and the neighbouring properties. The original analysis of the local character and the collection of spaces of the existing building have been brought forward in to a contemporary high quality design.

When seen from Plumstead High Street the original features stand proud, and the new entrance and extension act as a beacon to draw the public down and into their new facility.

Materials:
It is of utmost importance that the new extension complements and respects the original material palette, with new high quality equivalents. The following materials are proposed:

- **Waterstruck Red Brick**
  Used across the entirety of the new extension

- **Brick Detailing**
  Wrapping around new extension

- **Brick Detailing**
  Vertical protruding brick detail

- **Curtain Walling**
  Black Framed glazing to new entrance, gym and badminton court

- **Metal Louvres**
  Black Anodised Aluminium Louvres and door

Two Impressions of view from Plumstead High Street of proposed development

1 - Middle
   - East Elevation, from Quilter Street

2 - Middle
   - North Elevation from Plumstead High Street

3 - Middle
   - South Elevation, from Speranza Street

4 - Bottom
   - West Elevation, from Police Station
The Proposal - The Street
“A New Destination”

Highways
As part of the new proposal for Plumstead Library, the above streetscape will be improved in order to provide more suitable access to the building and its facilities. The following key moves have been made.

- **Pavement**
  - Footpath is extended out around the new gym

- **Blue Badge Parking Bays**
  - Increased to 2 bays, matching the current bay’s size

- **Car Parking**
  - Overall provision decreased due to additional Blue Badge bay and new Loading bay

- **Loading Bay**
  - Servicing the new facilities within the building, including the cafe and leisure

- **Cycle Parking**
  - New Sheffield Bike Stands on Plumstead High Street

Site Plan

- **Quilter Street**
- **Speranza Street**
- **Plumstead High Street**
- **Plumstead Library**
- **G/F Quilter Street**
- **N.T.S."
What Next?

• Following today’s consultation Residents and Stakeholders comments will be incorporated into the design

• Project information available until 6th July 2017 on www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/haveyoursay

• Planning Application to be submitted Autumn 2017, providing a further opportunity for comments to be received on the final designs by Residents and Stakeholders

• Construction to begin April 2018

• A consistent library service will be provided in Plumstead throughout the works

• Library and new facilities to open Autumn 2019