



Worcester City Council

A development and business plan for the Commandery

Draft Final Report

May 2015

Worcester City Council

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1 The project and our approach

1.1 The requirements of the brief

A capital development plan to address the following:

1. A review and distillation of all the reports commissioned to date.
2. An assessment of current visitor services and income generation with opportunities identified for change and growth.
3. A review of current plans for visitor flow and use of space.
4. A review of planned interpretation, opportunities for new display and linked interpretation in other sites around the City.
5. An analysis of the potential for high profile loans linked to the above.
6. An evaluation of the learning and engagement potential of the Commandery and any new offer.
7. A profile of museum environments within the building and their suitability for different categories of collection.
8. A review of building services, security and energy efficiency plus proposals for improvement.
9. An assessment of the Commandery's potential in relation to other development projects in the immediate vicinity, including the Royal Worcester factory and Museum and previous designs for Fort Royal Park.
10. An assessment of how the proposed investment will contribute to strategic and corporate objectives, in particular the City and County's visitor economy.

Also to include:

1. Assessment of timescales from commencement to practical completion.
2. Outline costs of fitting out, infrastructure, works and fees.
3. Fundraising potential and grant aid, including the costs of developing applications to the required standard.
4. Proposals and costs for implementing marketing plans.
5. Concept plans and visuals of key spaces.

A related outline business plan is also required which provides:

1. Financial modelling for the site from reopening, and the related Museums Worcestershire resources needed over a five year period.
2. A cost benefit analysis to assess the impact on service and property costs of any new proposals, together with the identification of new sources of income and an implementation plan.

3. A range of spending options from £100 - £500,000 and the anticipated return in terms of market potential for the building and the City.

Our approach has been to:

1. Review all previous studies specific and relevant to the Commandery and provide an overview of the findings (section 2).
2. Alongside Purcell, conservation architects, and Scribble & Nonsense, interpretation designers, undertake detailed site visits to assess the current visitor experience and the condition of the building and to test ideas for developing the offer (see sections 3, 5 and 6).
3. Consult collectively and individually with staff of Museums Worcestershire and Worcester City Council.
4. Undertake historical research to better understand the key periods and events in the life of the Commandery and the history of Worcester and its other key heritage sites more generally.
5. Workshop development ideas with staff of Museums Worcestershire.
6. Develop an interpretation brief for Scribble & Nonsense to respond to with preliminary designs for telling the story of the Battle of Worcester.
7. In words and images, make recommendations for a phased approach to renewing interpretation at the Commandery: phase 1 being the Battle of Worcester and an introduction to all the building and related heritage the City has to offer; later phases to include the Monastic Hospital, the visit of the US Presidents and Tudor/Stuart occupiers of the Commandery.
8. In words and images, make recommendations for renewing other parts of the visitor offer including the shop and front window.
9. Estimate the impact that the improved offer and related brand development and marketing will have on visitor numbers.
10. Understand the financial baseline and, based on estimates for increased visitors and with the help of specialists in catering, hires and retail, assess the potential for improved income generation at the Commandery.
11. On the basis of the advice provided by Purcell Architects, make recommendations for improvements in environmental conditions, again on a phased basis, focusing first on the areas of the building to be used for the Battle of Worcester and introductory exhibition.
12. Provide costs estimates for all our recommendations.
13. Business plan the Commandery operation for the current and three following years (2015/16 to 2018/19).

2 Distillation of findings from previous related studies

Museums Worcestershire recently commissioned a package of studies to test the heritage tourism and audience development potential of the Commandery's and Worcester's Civil War heritage and assess more generally how the Commandery might best contribute to Worcester's heritage offer.

These studies are:

- English Civil War in Worcestershire, TSE Research (Jan 2014);
- Strengthening Museums and the Visitor Economy in Worcester, TSE Research (March 2014);
- Audience research and evaluation of pilot interpretation, MHM (March 2014);
- The Commandery Pricing Plan, Blue Sail (March 2014);
- The Commandery Marketing Strategy, Blue Sail (March 2014);
- Heritage Product Development Final, TSE Research (April 2014).

Other research provided as background to this study:

- Potential Economic Impact of Worcestershire's Cultural Sector, commissioned by Worcestershire County Council, Amion Consulting and Blue Chip Tourism (Sept 2014).

Rather than summarise each study, in the following paragraphs we seek to bring the learning from the research together to provide a coherent context from which to develop the key strands for the future of the Commandery and Worcester's heritage offer.

2.1 The Commandery, Worcester and the Civil War

1. The story of the Commandery's Civil War significance, and its role as a headquarters for the Royalist militia during the Battle of Worcester, is currently told through an audio guide where it is one of six themes, each a different layer in the building's history. Rather than being factual and descriptive, the audio guide is narrative and dramatic in its account of the Battle of Worcester and the other themes. In each room, visitors may select which of the six themes to listen to. There is currently little other interpretation at the Commandery.
2. The audio guide was introduced in 2007 after restoration works at the Commandery; before there had been much more emphasis on the Battle of Worcester and the Civil War at the Commandery and there is lots of anecdotal evidence that repeat visitors (of which there are many) still miss some of the displays from pre-2007, like the 'Charles 1 Trial Scene', comprising mannequins and an accompanying film.

3. The research concludes that:

- a. The Commandery's potential to attract visitors is currently under-exploited. This could to some extent be addressed through improvements to interpretation in the building itself, but it is a wider issue, with poor wayfinding, limited interpretation at the City's other key sites, like the Cathedral and Fort Royal, and poor integration and connectivity between the different sites.
- b. The shortage of interpretation at other significant Civil War sites in the City makes it challenging to grasp the Worcester Civil War experience; there is a printable trail, but without that the visitor would have few clues.
- c. The particularity of Worcester's Civil War significance - the adjacency of the first battle (Powick Bridge, 1642) and the site of the Battle of Worcester in 1651, the last battle of the Civil War - and the survival of key sites and buildings provides the opportunity to develop the Civil War as Worcester's heritage USP.
- d. Worcester as a whole under-exploits its heritage assets and potential as one of the country's most significant heritage cities, see further below.

2.2 The Commandery and Worcester's wider heritage

1. There are other very important stories to tell about Worcester too, stories from other historical periods, but with related themes. In the research much is made of the visit in 1786 of the two, later to be, American Presidents, Jefferson and Adams, and the significance of Fort Royal for them. Less is made of the fact that King John and Prince Arthur are buried in the Cathedral. King John, of course, had a significant effect on the development of power relationships in this Country and had Prince Arthur, Henry VIII's older brother and first husband of Catherine of Aragon, not died and Henry become king and married his widow, the Reformation and Dissolution of the Monasteries might never have happened.
2. The Commandery was there through all this history and more. Evidence suggests that a building on the site of the Commandery dates back to the eleventh century and there is documentary evidence that the origins of the current building, a Medieval Monastic Hospital, were there in the thirteenth century. Much of the core was built in the mid to late fifteenth century and it is from this period that the Painted Chamber dates; one painting depicts Thomas a Beckett, taking us back to the time of King John's father, Henry II ("Will no one rid me of this turbulent priest?"). The Painted Chamber was painted over during the Dissolution of the Monasteries when the Hospital was suppressed in 1540, protecting it for the future. So, this one room tells us much about the battles between church and state.
3. Later developments at the Commandery include Georgian rooms, contemporaneous with the Presidential visits, from which Fort Royal, where they stood, can be viewed.

4. The Commandery is therefore the natural setting for telling the story of the Battle of Worcester and Worcester's wider Civil War story. The Commandery can also play an important role in telling Worcester's other powerful stories, stories from Medieval times through to the eighteenth century, and linking the history of that site to other key heritage sites in the City. Altogether, the Commandery has the potential to play a central part in Worcester's developing tourism offer.

2.3 Visits to the Commandery

1. Museums Worcestershire's data tell us that there are currently around 20,000 visits a year to the Commandery. Of these around half are admissions to tour the building and see its displays; the remainder are schools visits, events, room hires etc.
2. Over 60% of visits are from within the 30 minute drivetime and 80% from within the one hour drivetime. Data compiled by Heritage Counts puts 62% of visitors to historic properties as local visitors/day trippers, so the Commandery figures are not unusual.
3. The Commandery is a charged attraction, excepting Worcester City Council residents; this factor will tend to skew visits towards locals and, indeed, around two out of five of the 10,000 tour visits are free admissions.
4. Observational research conducted by MHM concluded that the Commandery's visitors are evenly split between family and non-family visitors.
5. MHM's qualitative research found that:
 - a. Visitors tend to know little about what to expect before arrival (there is relatively sparse online presence).
 - b. Visitors are unanimous in their appreciation of the building and its historical importance; the Painted Chamber and Great Hall are often singled out as particularly special.
 - c. Opinions about the post-2007 interpretation differ markedly, but by and large the 'empty room' approach is not popular.
 - d. The narrative and dramatic approach in the audio guide tends to polarise opinion. People comment that features in the rooms are not described, while the stories that are told rely on speculation and imagination. The building's different historical periods mean that not all the historical layers have relevance to all parts; this causes confusion for visitors.
 - e. Family visitors and other group visitors tend to find the audio interpretation gets in the way of a collaborative experience.
 - f. The few remaining interactives, largely aimed at children, tend to be well received.
 - g. The lack of internal wayfinding and signage are noted by many.
 - h. Staff are praised generally and guided tours, which provide more of an overview of the six themes, are positively received.

- i. The children orientated events programme is much praised. Living history events are well-received, but sometimes poorly attended.
6. Emerging issues from the MHM study include the need for: greater clarity of purpose at the Commandery; a more diverse interpretation offer, including more artefacts, descriptions of the architecture and the internal features, a map and a detailed guide book; an offer that allows for more multi-purpose use of space.
7. Visitors' responses to four pilot interpretation projects at the Commandery - 'Battle of Worcester', 'Birthplace of Democracy', 'Treasures of the Building' (Painted Room) and 'Characters and Stories' (kitchen) - were monitored through MHM's research period. The interpretation tools were categorised as 'visual/decoration', 'text' and 'interactives'. Findings, based on relatively small numbers for research purposes, included:
 - a. Maintaining a mix of interpretive methods is important; people learn in different ways. For example, families are rarely drawn to text based interpretation, preferring visuals and interactives, whereas adult-only groups will usually spend time with text based interpretation.
 - b. Offering multiple activities extends dwell time. Film/video particularly extends dwell time.
 - c. Original features, like the Painted Chamber and the kitchen fireplace, tended to appeal to visitors.
 - d. Re-enactors at the Battle of Worcester weekend were very successful at engaging visitors by, as visitors said, 'bringing stories to life'.
 - e. The audio guide approach will tend to suit visitors who are inclined to be 'followers' - visitors who look at most things in a sequential pattern - but will suit other visitor types less well, including 'browsers, who are typically the most usual sort of visitor.
8. MHM's consultation with visitors about how interesting they would find different themes for the future at the Commandery, showed that visitors are keen to hear stories that have direct relevance to the building. For example, visitors are interested to learn about the Commandery's history as a Medieval hospital, but struggled to see how Magna Carta was directly connected to the building, so were less enthusiastic about the story. Visitors did, however appreciate that the Magna Carta story and many others were relevant to Worcester and that those stories are not yet well told in Worcester. Discussion about the risqué, the gory and the bizarre was most animated, though this was combined with a healthy respect for the Commandery's responsibility to impart history.
9. MHM's consultation with visitors about interpretive methods emphasised that choice is important; in respect of particular methods the findings were:
 - a. Re-enactment was welcomed as an interpretive method, though considered probably best limited to special occasions.
 - b. Tour guides at the Commandery are well received now and would be welcomed as part of a mix of interpretive methods for the future.

- c. Responses to interactive technology were positive, but strongly caveated by the need for it always to be working.
 - d. A preference was expressed for objects you can touch over those behind glass cases.
 - e. Audio guides were perceived by some as being suitable if you are on your own, but as getting in the way of a group experience.
 - f. Some were enthusiastic about film, lighting and projection - regular visitors less so.
 - g. More text panels were generally thought to be appropriate.
 - h. Recreation would be welcomed, the lack of it currently disappoints.
10. In conclusion, MHM stress the importance of the Commandery's Civil War history, i.e. its use as a military headquarters during the Battle of Worcester - "this happened here, between these walls" - but also the significance of other periods of its history, particularly its origins as a monastic hospital. Visitors' responses make clear that the stories told in the building should either be of local interest or pertain to the building. So, if the focus is on the Civil War, it must be Worcester's Civil War, and, where possible, the Commandery's Civil War. Other stories about what has happened in the building should also be told, though these might be given less prominence.
11. Visitors' responses also support better connection and linkage between the different Civil War sites in the City - Fort Royal, the Cathedral, etc - and on its edges, like Powick.

2.4 Visits to Worcester

1. The great majority of visitors to Worcester, around 94%, are day domestic visitors; 5% are staying domestic and only 1% staying overseas visitors (VisitEngland and VisitBritain data). Looking at data for comparator cities, like Exeter and Chester, the percentage breakdown between categories of visitor conforms to a similar pattern, but the overall numbers visiting Worcester are much lower.
2. The national data (ONS/VisitEngland) also tell us that overseas visitors have a high propensity to include culture, art and heritage activities within their itineraries, domestic visitors much less so. 'Sightseeing on foot' and 'just relaxing' are the most favoured activities of domestic overnights, though around 10% include heritage amongst activities they engage in. Day domestics particularly favour 'visiting family and friends' and 'going out for a meal', though small percentages do include visiting museums and historic houses.
3. There are two international visitor hotspots within the 45 minute drivetime, Stratford-upon-Avon and Broadway. Oxford takes an hour and a half, but the A44 route to Oxford takes you through Evesham, a town with significant Civil War history, and several Cotswold towns. Currently tour operators pass close to Worcester taking visitors to these destinations, but Worcester is not on their itineraries.

2.5 Heritage tourism potential

1. Primary survey based research carried out by TSE Research (a total of 970 responses), found that:
 - a. 38% of respondents said they would be likely or very likely to visit a Civil War themed destination; this rose to 70% when the offer was broadened to a 'Heritage City' offer including a cathedral, riverside experience, good shopping and a variety of other types of cultural activities.
 - b. At least 60% of respondents would be likely or very likely to visit a cathedral, visit a historic city centre house, walk a city centre heritage trail, visit museums, visit waterside areas, and visit shops. The most popular activity was visiting riverside areas, 82.3% of the overall sample reporting their interest in this activity.
 - c. What people enjoy most about visiting historic destinations is the opportunity to find out more about one's history (31.3%). Other enjoyable features include the opportunity to have a nice day out in lovely surroundings (23.3%), to wander and absorb the atmosphere (19.3%) and to enjoy something that is informative and educational (21.1%).
2. TSE Research concludes that the Civil War theme has the potential to add value to a broader Heritage City offer for marketing Worcester, but that the Civil War theme as a stand-alone would be more risky.

2.6 Income generation potential

1. Alongside the work on exploring the potential for developing the core offer at the Commandery, some preliminary work was also done on income generation. This focused on admissions pricing and pricing structures and included some advice on wedding hires.
2. The admissions income baseline is around £17,750 (average of last four years). On the basis of the suggested new prices and pricing structures and projected growth in visitor numbers following a relaunch, income from admissions was projected to increase to more than three times current levels by the third year.
3. The work that we go on to do will include revisiting this work and developing a range of other income streams, including catering and enhanced retail.

2.7 Economic impact potential

The TSE Research assessed the potential of the Civil War to become one of the main, if not the main, selling points in attracting heritage tourists to Worcester and whether the Commandery has sufficient appeal as a sustainable tourism offer to contribute to the economic vitality of the city.

The research findings placed Worcester “undoubtedly in the ‘premier’ league of Civil War destinations” and identified a number of opportunities to develop this theme and

increase the Civil War's resonance with both overseas and domestic (day and overnight) heritage markets (as well as the educational market) thereby having the potential to make a significant contribution to growing the visitor economy.

The report acknowledges that in a wider tourist context the Civil War alone will not be sufficient to significantly generate additional visitor numbers to Worcester; it is the combination of the Civil War offer with Worcester's existing heritage city offer that together has the potential to create an offer that resonates strongly with the wider tourist market:

"The combined Civil War and Heritage City offer we believe could be the concept from which to develop and market Worcester's visitor profile."

Further research, conducted into the "potential economic impact of Worcestershire's cultural sector," concluded that there is significant potential to grow Worcestershire's visitor economy. An initial assessment of potential visitor growth estimated that an additional £4.3 million of visitor expenditure could be generated.

Once deadweight and displacement effects are taken into account, it was estimated that a total of 35 net additional jobs could be created within Worcestershire - of which it is estimated that 27 would be taken up by local residents - and could generate £0.9 million of net additional GVA per annum.

3 Baseline assessment and identification of opportunities - the visitor experience

In this section we look at all aspects of the visitor experience as it is now (section 3.1) and then go on to look at the opportunities for improvement in all these areas (section 3.2). At the end of this section we make recommendations for realisation - which of the opportunities to realise as soon as possible and which to plan to progress for later stages of redevelopment at the Commandery.

3.1 The visitor offer and experience now

The Commandery once lay outside the City walls, but now is on the edge of the City centre. The Commandery's front entrance lies on Sidbury, just beyond the bridge over the canal, and is effectively one of a series of shop fronts. From the front, the Commandery looks modest in size; only by approaching from the rear can you really appreciate its scale, though the side view along the canal and the view from the gate on the street also suggest a building of scale and significance.

The shop front entrance currently displays six clocks, each representing a different and significant date from the Commandery's history, effectively introducing the interpretive themes. However, this message is very difficult to decode and the clocks themselves now don't work so the display is static. As a result the shop front opportunity is currently rather wasted. There are few other clues about what lies inside, not least because the Grade 1 listing severely limits banners and other similar techniques for drawing attention to the offer. It is also quite difficult to see through to the shop because it is some distance from the foyer and not brightly lit.

The front of house staff are easily found once you are through the door and in our experience are unfailingly friendly and helpful.

We understand that visitors often arrive not knowing what to expect, partly because it's difficult to get a full picture online. We observe that the Commandery does not feature very immediately in response to a general search on 'visiting Worcester'. For example, on Trip Advisor, it comes 19th out of 74 things to do in Worcester (the Cathedral comes top). A more targeted search on 'The Commandery' comes up with entries on websites including Worcestershire Hub, Visit Worcestershire, Wikipedia and Worcester City Council and it has a presence on Facebook and Twitter. It's straightforward enough to find out when it's open and what it costs to get in, but perhaps less easy to get a strong impression of what to expect when you get there; this no doubt deters some potential visitors. The websites are definitely short of images, externals and internals.

For those who do find their way to the Commandery, the front of house staff immediately introduce the visitor to what's on offer at the Commandery and explain the audio guide and how to use it. There is a charge to visit for all but residents of the

Worcester City Council area: adults £5.50, concessions £4.50, children 5 plus £2.50, plus family, group and season ticket offers.

Other than the audio guide, the standard visitor experience is unguided. In each room the visitor has the choice of listening to an extract from one or more of six stories about different periods in the history of the Commandery. The visitor experience is, therefore, undifferentiated: all six stories are told in all rooms rather than particular parts of the building being dedicated to particular stories.

The six stories are:

- The Feast of St Wulfstan, 19 January 1480;
- Gathering following the death of owner Robert Wylde, January 1607;
- The Battle of Worcester, 3 September 1651;
- Georgian family and business life, 1767;
- College for the Blind, 22 July 1881;
- Littlebury's Worcester Press, 1952.

The rooms are for the most part empty. There are a few significant items on display in sealed cases, most notably the funeral pall in the Hamilton room, and some rooms are used for the display of more standard items from the collections, but these tend to have little connection with the Commandery, though they do help to tell the Worcester story, e.g. glove making. There are also a few interactive displays and some incidental activities, like clothes for dressing up.

As we reported in the previous section, opinions about this approach to interpreting the Commandery, which dates from 2007, differ markedly. By and large the 'empty room' approach is not popular. The narrative and dramatic approach in the audio guide tends to polarise opinion. People comment that features in the rooms are not described, whilst the stories that are told rely on speculation and imagination. The building's different historical periods mean that not all the historical layers have relevance to all parts; this causes confusion for visitors. Family visitors and other group visitors tend to find the audio interpretation gets in the way of a collaborative experience.

We have reviewed the content of the six themes and tested how they work by using the audio guide on site. We have read the transcripts for all six themes, tested the Battle of Worcester theme in full on site and dipped into the other themes on site. In our view the six themes approach spread across the entire building is an ambitious and flawed approach to interpreting the Commandery.

We consider that the strong themes from the current six are the Battle of Worcester and the Monastic Hospital:

- The Battle of Worcester because it was the single most significant historical event in which the Commandery played a key role and, of course, the Commandery's story is a key part of the wider Worcester story, indeed the site where much of the fighting took place, Fort Royal, is clearly visible from the Commandery.

- The Monastic Hospital theme is strong because it was for this purpose that the Commandery was originally built and a role it fulfilled for centuries, brought to an end with the biggest 'land grab' in the Country's history, the Dissolution of the Monasteries. The Painted Chamber survives from this Medieval past and there are vivid stories to tell about miracles at the Commandery and the Commandery as a place of pilgrimage. There are stories too of wider political significance, with the depiction in the Painted Chamber of the murder of Archbishop Thomas a Beckett in Canterbury Cathedral.

Internal wayfinding, other than through listening to the audio guide, is limited. We have observed visitors wandering from room to room, not using the audio guide, clearly puzzled to understand the experience.

The overall visitor route is very lengthy. Whilst some rooms are education spaces, offices and storage, most of the building is accessible to the visitor. This is an attractive feature in some ways, but it must be tiring for many and, combined with difficulties understanding the stories (unless you use the audio guide and even then it's challenging), makes the experience unsatisfactory at a number of levels. The lack of a cafe, somewhere to sit down and take a break, further exacerbates these issues.

Events are an important part of the Commandery's annual programme. Some are regular events, like craft activities in holiday periods, and the major annual Living History event in February, others are devised to commemorate particular events. So, this year, as a part of national Magna Carta 800th anniversary celebrations, the Commandery is staging a year long programme of events themed to Liberty and Democracy, focusing on the historical events, like the Battle of Worcester and the visit of the US Presidents, that we discuss in section 3.2.3. This includes a series of talks, organised in partnership with the Battle of Worcester Society, and events like Worcester LiberTea.

Established hires include Fright Nights (ghost hunting), Shakespeare at the Commandery and Ghost Walks (both hires by Worcester Live). There are also occasional wedding receptions and other room hires.

The gardens are a very enjoyable part of the visitor experience; even in bad weather looking out from the Commandery, across the gardens and up to Fort Royal, is a remarkable experience. The work keeping the garden maintained and further developing its potential, with the help of community gardeners, is excellent.

The shop is large and well placed on the visitor route, as the visitor passes through it on arrival and on departure. The retail offer, however, is not strongly linked to the visitor experience at the Commandery and the fittings and visual merchandising do not successfully capture the feel of the place.

We have already made reference to the lack of a cafe. The introduction of a cafe (in rooms adjacent to room 26 on the plan at appendix 1) as a pilot last year was very well received last year and plans are well underway for establishing a cafe in this location for at least six months of the year (April to October).

We cannot finish this section on the current visitor experience without acknowledging that many of the rooms in the Commandery are unheated or barely heated. This of course detracts very considerably from visitors' enjoyment other than in mild or warm weather. See further section 6.

3.2 The visitor offer and experience - opportunities

3.2.1 Pre-visit information

There's certainly potential for a more vivid and easily accessible online presence and it's priority is to ensure that the more generic, less targeted searches, like 'visiting Worcester' get quicker results than they do at the moment. Another priority is to help people visualise in advance by getting more images online on the pages that people will arrive at quickly. As we discuss just below, the shop front entrance has some advantages, but it also belies the scale and magnificence of what lies beyond, so it's important to offer potential visitors the opportunity have a taste of what to expect when they explore the building.

Some of this could be done immediately; some will need to wait until improvements in the offer have been achieved, which we go on to discuss below.

3.2.2 Visitor arrival, shop and cafe

The shop front entrance has the potential to be visually striking and the foyer and shop beyond it more visible, legible and exciting.

The foyer could also be animated more, possibly with larger scale artefacts that do not require protection or with facsimiles.

The shop and front of house area could readily be improved to offer a more immediately attractive and engaging experience that speak more of what the visitor should expect to discover. The stock could be revised, the fittings adjusted and visual merchandising improved, quickly and inexpensively. In appendix 2 are a few images of museum shops elsewhere that illustrate the type of presentation that tends to appeal to visitors (the stock in these images is not what we are suggesting for the Commandery, though stock of this type may well prove to be relevant to the visitor offer).

Plans to locate the cafe on the side adjacent to the canal offer, visible from Sidbury Bridge as well as the towpath, offers the potential to draw the attention of prospective visitors' and more general passers-by to that part of the offer. We understand that staff experimented with a number of displays last year and that they will further develop this.

The gate entrance, arrived at as you pass the front entrance on your left, is, we understand, used to good effect on days when there are re-enactment events at the Commandery by posting 'soldiers' at the gate. We understand that the gate is usually closed for good reason because staffing is focused inside in the shop, but it would be possible to make more of the view, for example by introducing plant sales and by making it clear that the area you see is open to the public.

3.2.3 Interpretive themes, locations and access

The Commandery displays centuries of architectural styles, building materials and methods and provides natural settings for telling stories from different periods. Focusing particular interpretive themes in different and appropriate areas of the building would have a number of advantages over the current situation; it would:

- Help to address the problem that the visitor route is currently over-lengthy, providing instead discrete visitor experiences within defined areas of the building, each better suited to a single visit.
- Encourage repeat visits as people return to experience a different theme and area of the building.
- Allow for the introduction of a range of different interpretation techniques; maintaining empty rooms is to a degree dictated by the ‘six themes everywhere’ approach. By dedicating areas of the building to particular themes, the spaces can be brought to life using visual, interactive and engaging interpretation. As the pilot project research showed, visitors welcome and value different types of interpretation; different approaches suit different people.

As we say above, the Battle of Worcester and the Monastic Hospital themes are the strongest of the current interpretive themes and there are areas of the Commandery particularly well suited to telling these two stories.

We recommend that the Battle of Worcester story is told in the rooms numbered 14-20 on the plan. (appendix 1). Visitors for the Battle of Worcester would enter at ground floor by the side entrance into room 23 and find an introduction to the Civil War (context for the experience to come) in room 22 and then access the first floor by stairs or lift, experiencing the Battle of Worcester story by progressing through rooms 20 through to room 14. Our initial planning for telling this story dedicates room 17 to the Parliamentary story of the day leading up to and the Battle itself and room 14 to the Royalist story. Room 15, ‘escape or capture’, contrasts the story of Charles II’s escape and the fate of the captured Scots, many of whom were transported to New England, Bermuda and the West Indies, giving the story an important international and genealogical dimension. In appendix 3 there is some visualisation of these ideas. Additional ideas include introducing ‘case studies’ of individual Worcester residents during the days leading up to the Battle of Worcester, while the City was occupied by the Royalists, ‘The faithful city?’.

The Monastic Hospital theme is best told in the Painted Chamber and adjacent rooms, rooms 29, 28 and possibly 27. By incorporating room 27 too, the area would flow better for visitors, arriving by either lift or stairs adjacent to room 27. However, we consider that it is less of a priority to develop the interpretation for this theme; the focus for our current work is the Battle of Worcester.

Since the audio guide interpretation was introduced, the opportunity to commemorate, at the Commandery, the visit to Worcester in 1786 of the two, later to be, Presidents of the United States, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, has become a focus of interest. The opportunity is indeed striking. From the Georgian wing of the

Commandery, built only a few years before Adams' and Jefferson's visit to Worcester, you see Fort Royal, of which John Adams said:

"And do Englishmen so soon forget the ground where liberty was fought for? Tell your neighbors and your children that this is holy ground; much holier than that on which your churches stand. All England should come in pilgrimage to this hill once a year."
Extract from John Adams' diary, April 1786.

The story of the two Presidents is compelling: why they were in England, why they were touring English gardens, which gardens they chose to visit (some now very open to the public) and why; their turbulent relationship over the decades; their politics and their roles in securing US independence; their presidencies; and the twist of fate that saw them both die hundreds miles apart on 4 July 1826, fifty years to the day after the Declaration of Independence was signed.

The ground floor rooms in the Georgian wing of the Commandery, rooms 5 and 6 and room 9 too if telling the story requires it, provide a perfect setting for telling their Worcester story and for contextualising that story in their wider stories. These rooms are readily accessible from the Great Hall, through room 4 which would be used as an introduction to what to expect along the corridor. These rooms can also be accessed from their own front door from the gardens.

In view of the primary focus of this stage of work being on developing the Battle of Worcester theme, we have not advanced plans for interpretation of this theme, nor commissioned images of how the spaces might look. However, we have done quite a bit of research on Adams' and Jefferson's time in England and there is plenty of easily accessible contemporaneous documentary evidence (primarily John Adams' diaries) and modern research available, for example an essay written by Andrea Wulf, University of Yale: 'Thomas Jefferson's and John Adams's English Garden Tour: Gardens as Political Statements'. There is, of course, a wealth of material on their careers, their friendship (and period of enmity), some already in a form that could be displayed, subject to obtaining the requisite permissions, for example this short film about their deaths on the same day, 4 July 1826: <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/thomas-jefferson-and-john-adams-die>

These three themes are, we suggest, the three most compelling stories the Commandery has to tell a visiting public. We understand, too, from consultation with the learning team, that these themes fit well with the school curriculum (see further section 4). The Presidents' story, of course, has a strong international dimension and the potential to attract particularly US visitors.

There is other potential, for example the possibility of using the seventeenth century inventories to provide guidance on ways to interpret some of the rooms. We consider that the rooms most suited to this treatment are those marked 11 and 12 at first floor level, although many changes have been made to the interiors by later occupants. We do not think it is a priority to improve the interpretation in these rooms, they already offer the opportunity for some 'building detective' visiting that can be simply encouraged through maps, guides and in room panels.

This leaves devising an appropriate interpretive treatment for the Great Hall (room 2) and a means by which the Hamilton Room (room 3), the room in which the Duke of Hamilton was temporarily buried before being reburied in the Cathedral, would best be integrated with the visitor experience.

At the moment the Great Hall is the room where visitors start and choose how they will approach their tour - starting with either what is called in the audio guide the 'rich side' (the garden range) or the 'poor side' (the canal range) of the building. The Great Hall is also regularly used for events at the Commandery, so any interpretation in the Great Hall needs to be removable.

Our proposal is that the Battle of Worcester experience is accessed from room 23 so the Great Hall will not be the point of arrival for visitors choosing that. The Monastic Hospital area of the building can also be reached without entering the Great Hall, either by entering through the large double doors from the courtyard. And the Presidents' area can be accessed through its own front door from the garden. So separating off the Great Hall if necessary is a possibility.

In the Hamilton Room a Worcester treasure is on display in a large sealed case: a funeral pall dating from the late middle ages, sometimes referred to as Prince Arthur's pall, on loan from the Clothiers Company following its restoration in 2007 with support from HLF. Panels explain the funeral pall and provide an account of Hamilton's death and temporary burial. In our view this room should remain much as it is now. Visitors can be directed towards it from the Battle of Worcester experience - room 14 is immediately above and there are stairs alongside. Unfortunately, lift users will have to return to the lift beyond room 20 and re-enter the building at ground floor.

In the Great Hall we recommend that there is an introduction to all the stories to be explored at the Commandery and to the wider Worcester stories, including Prince Arthur and King John in the Cathedral and the Battle of Worcester Trail. See appendix 4 for some initial visualisation of the Great Hall.

These would be movable displays allowing for them to be stored or re-sited when the Great Hall is needed for events.

3.2.4 Events and hires

As we say above, events are already an established part of the programme at the Commandery and there will be opportunities for new events as the development plans are realised. By focusing stories in particular parts of the building, the development plans offer the opportunities for dedicating other parts of the building to income generation, including wedding ceremonies and receptions. We discuss these possibilities in section 5.

3.2.5 Links to other heritage in the City

In our view there are two critical linkages that need full development:

- Battle of Worcester Heritage Trail
- Worcester Cathedral.

The Battle of Worcester Heritage Trail, a partnership initiative of the Battle of Worcester Society and Museums Worcestershire, starts at Fort Royal, passes the Commandery, crosses City Walls Road into Friar Street and onto New Street to King Charles' House, past the site of St Martin's Gate, into City Walls Road, back to Cornmarket, along Mealcheapen Street and Church Street and left into High Street, past the Guildhall to the Cathedral. There is a downloadable map of the trail, but no on street way finding.

The Cathedral is a key part of the trail because it was from the top of the Cathedral tower that Charles watched the progress of the battle and planned tactics with his commanders. After the battle, prisoners were kept in the Cathedral and the dead were buried in the surrounding grounds. The Cathedral is the burial place of the Duke of Hamilton who died of his wounds at the Commandery, Cromwell having refused to allow his body to be returned to Scotland. These stories can be told in the Commandery and their telling at the Cathedral could be strengthened, encouraging all visitors to the Cathedral to visit the Commandery.

Another major historical event that links the Cathedral and the Commandery is the tomb of Prince Arthur in the Cathedral. Had Prince Arthur, Henry VIII's older brother and first husband of Catherine of Aragon, not died and Henry become king and married his widow, the Reformation and the Dissolution of the Monasteries, when the Commandery was seized and sold into private ownership, might never have happened. There is a local story too to tell of rivalry between the Bishops of Worcester and Commanders at the Commandery. These stories can be told at the Commandery when the Monastic Hospital theme is more fully developed.

3.3 Visitor offer and experience - priorities

In brief summary, therefore, the immediate priorities are:

1. Creating the new Battle of Worcester visitor experience;
2. Warming the spaces where the Battle of Worcester experience is sited and the Great Hall to an appropriate level;
3. Creating the interpretation for the Great Hall;
4. Transforming the front window and foyer;
5. Giving the shop a makeover, sourcing new stock, improving visual merchandising;
6. Getting the cafe up and running;
7. Branding and visual identity development; developing a phased marketing strategy; implementing phase 1;
8. Enhancing the Battle of Worcester Heritage Trail with on street way finding.

In section 7 we provide cost estimates for achieving these priorities.

The medium term priorities are:

1. Enhancing the Monastic Hospital visitor experience;
2. Creating the US Presidents visitor experience;
3. Warming these spaces to an appropriate level;
4. Fully investigating continuing issues with the building.

4 Baseline assessment and identification of opportunities - learning

4.1 Baseline assessment

The Commandery offers award winning educational provision: it has been awarded the Sandford Award for heritage education twice, in 2009 and 2014. School visits comprise 10 - 15% of the overall visitor numbers to the Commandery, typically amounting to 2,000 - 2,500 visitors each year; schools are an important contingent of the visitor market to the Commandery.

The frequency of school visits can fluctuate throughout the year, for example in 2013 there was only one day in November that there was not a school visit booked. School visits during 2014/15 have been spread more evenly. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there is a high proportion of repeat visits amongst schools (data to follow).

All three of Museum Worcestershire's venues have distinct offers, which is encouraged, and each venue is mindful not to compete with the others. Of the three venues, the Commandery gets the most visits from Keystage 3 pupils; approximately 50% of its school visits are Keystage 2 pupils, the other 50% are Keystage 3 pupils.

The Commandery can readily accommodate up to 40 children a day, as activities/ learning sessions can be delivered in its two learning spaces concurrently. Groups are split into smaller sized groups than classes; a school visit that comprises up to 40 pupils is typically split into two groups, any visit that exceeds 40 is typically split into three groups.

Schools prefer to bring smaller groups of pupils to maximise the quality of the experience. Schools with more than two classes are encouraged to visit over several consecutive days to keep the group sizes smaller, where schools are unable to do this the Commandery will accommodate larger groups.

Larger school parties can be accommodated. A recent visit of 150 pupils was split into four groups, two groups went on city tours whilst the other two participated in learning activities in the Commandery; the groups then swapped. A fourth member of staff was brought on board to facilitate the fourth group.

Schools are invited to choose between two learning themes: Tudor Times and the English Civil War. Since the changes to the national curriculum (which we discuss in more detail below) the English Civil War has become more popular and approximately 75% of schools now take up the English Civil War theme. The Tudor Times theme is more popular with the primary schools (Keystage 2 pupils) and the Civil War is more popular with secondary schools (Keystage 3 pupils).

The learning programme is offered to schools on a “pick and mix” basis; schools are invited to choose three or four of the following themed activities/workshops, each of which takes approximately 45 minutes; groups rotate through them:

- Life as a soldier in the English Civil War, which includes handling replica props, e.g. eating and drinking vessels;
- Arms and armour, which includes handling items from the collection - plate armour, helmets, ranging weapons, blunted swords and decommissioned muskets;
- Pike drill and canon loading - a fibre glass canon is loaded with balls and broomsticks are used as pikes in the pike drill;
- Two accompanied walks are also offered - a talk about the Battle of Worcester and a walk up Fort Royal forms the shorter accompanied walk and a longer city walk (approximately 90 minutes) taking in the City’s significant Civil War sights and Charles’ escape route along Friar Street.

Schools participating in the Tudor Times theme are invited to choose from the following activities/workshops:

- Candles and quills - pupils make a beeswax candle and write with a quill;
- Fashion and dressing in Tudor times - pupils are invited to dress in costumes and discuss how societal status influenced dress in Tudor times;
- Tudor music and dance - Merry Noise, a group specialising in Tudor music deliver this strand of the activity programme;
- Tudor food - props from the handling collection are used as well as culinary herbs from the herb garden. This theme is currently being revised.

Schools can also take part in the ‘building detectives’ trail throughout the building, a spotter trail with visual clues to highlight the architectural significance of the building.

Schools can supplement their third choice with an element of the Commandery’s audio guide; many schools choose this option to keep the cost down. A teacher’s guide was developed to enable self-guiding and question and answer sessions to be delivered by teachers, but Commandery staff now accompany school groups instead.

For all of the above learning themes schools can choose from an illustrated talk (using a large array of props from the handling collection); object handling; role-play; and activities.

Primarily visiting schools require a quality learning experience for their pupils; a dedicated learning/activity space, off the visitor route, in which their learning content can be delivered is essential.

Schools are very keen on authenticity and interactivity, not necessarily digital interactivity, but they are keen to see and to be able to handle “real objects and artefacts”, as well as high quality displays and activity that engages pupils.

The Sandford Award comes with specific requirements, secure storage for coats, bags and lunches etc. off the main visitor route, as well as a dedicated space for pupils to eat their lunches with access to toilets and washing facilities.

Feedback from schools is limited, many do not respond to requests to provide feedback of their experience, but those that do provide positive feedback and report that the Commandery's offer meets the requirements of the curriculum.

4.2 Context

4.2.1 The market

Schools come from across the West Midlands region - Gloucester, Shropshire, Walsall and Stoke-on-Trent - and there is the occasional visit from further afield, such as the USA. However, the majority of visiting schools are local. Below we set out in age bands the numbers of children (under 15) who live in Worcester City, Worcestershire and the West Midlands.

We have sourced the numbers of pupils enrolled in primary schools in Worcester City and Worcestershire and disaggregated these into year groups. We have calculated the total number of children enrolled in Keystages 1 (Years 1 and 2), 2 (Years 3, 4, 5 and 6), 3 (Years 7, 8 and 9), 4 (Years 10 and 11) and 5 (Years 12, 13 and 14). Pupils in Reception fall within the Early Years Foundation Stage, which also includes pre school children. These figures do not include children who are home or privately educated.

Age	Year	Total number of pupils on school roll
2	Pre school (EY)	103
3	Pre school (EY)	1,665
4	Reception (EY)	6,245
Early years total		8013
5	Year 1 (KS1)	6,143
6	Year 2 (KS1)	6,127
Keystage 1 total		12,270
7	Year 3 (KS2)	6,189
8	Year 4 (KS2)	5,943
9	Year 5 (KS2)	5,915
10	Year 6 (KS2)	5,809
Keystage 2 total		23,856
11	Year 7 (KS3)	5,630
12	Year 8 (KS3)	5,438
13	Year 9 (KS3)	5,534
Keystage 3 total		16,602
14	Year 10 (KS4)	5,690
15	Year 11 (KS4)	5,782
Keystage 4 total		11,472

16	Year 12 (KS5)	2,533
17	Year 13 (KS5)	2,060
18	Year 14 (KS5)	218
Keystage 5 total		4,811
Total all pupils		77,024

The following table sets out the number of schools (by type) that are Local Authority maintained and that have Academy status. The table shows that a third of Worcestershire's schools overall have adopted Academy status, which means that they are not required to follow the national curriculum. The proportion of Academies is particularly high amongst secondary schools and special schools, the significant majority of both are Academies.

School classification	Local Authority maintained	Academy status
Nursery	1	0
Primary Schools (including First Schools)	153	23
Middle Schools	14	6
Secondary Schools	5	24
Special Schools	5	4
Pupil Referral Units	3	1
Total: all schools	181	61

4.2.2 The Curriculum

Recent changes in the national curriculum make it less prescriptive. Schools can now deliver themes that fit under “creative learning” and fit themes around other core curricular areas, e.g. an in depth local study or social history. So, although the Tudors are no longer explicitly on the curriculum, some schools (mainly primaries) continue teaching the subject and the Commandery's Tudor Times theme still attracts schools.

Academies are not required to follow the curriculum. The above table shows that there are currently 61 academies in Worcestershire (approximately a third of all schools).

The recent changes resulted initially in a dip in visits as schools familiarised themselves with the new curriculum requirements and developed teaching resources, etc. In recent months the pattern of school bookings, in particular for the Civil War theme, has begun to settle down.

The recent changes to the national curriculum introduce considerable opportunity for the Commandery. The English Civil War has been introduced as a topic, the struggle between Church and Crown, the Magna Carta and the emergence of Parliament (building on the opportunity to develop links with the Cathedral, where King John is buried) also feature as topics.

Whilst there is considerable competition for school visits the new national curriculum has a focus on “local history and local stories,” which will make the Commandery of particular relevance and interest to schools in Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Warwickshire and Oxfordshire. Schools are required to undertake an in depth local history study and we recommend that the Commandery develops an in depth study on its history through the times, which, having visited the Commandery, local schools could then use, thereby meeting one criterion of the national curriculum.

The national curriculum states that a high quality history education “ ... should inspire pupils' curiosity to know more about the past [they should be equipped] to ask perceptive questions, think critically, weigh evidence, sift arguments and develop perspective and judgement. History helps pupils to understand the complexity of people's lives, the process of change, the diversity of societies and relationships between different groups, as well as their own identity and the challenges of their time.”

In order to outline the relevance that some of the Commandery's interpretative themes have to the new history curriculum we have identified the topics that are significant.

The core themes of the curriculum for Keystages 1 and 2 predate 1066, however there is the following requirement for a local history study, either:

- a study over time tracing how several aspects of national history are reflected in the locality (this can go beyond 1066); or
- a study of an aspect of history or a site dating from a period beyond 1066 that is significant in the locality.

The curriculum at Keystage 3 presents more opportunity for the Commandery, as the following themes are featured:

- The development of the Church, state and society in Medieval Britain 1066 - 1509; non-statutory examples include:
 - The struggle between Church and Crown;
 - Magna Carta and the emergence of Parliament;
 - Society, economy and culture: for example feudalism, religion in daily life (parishes, monasteries, abbeys), farming, trade and towns (especially the wool trade), art, architecture and literature.
- The development of Church, State and Society in Britain 1509 - 1745; non-statutory examples include:
 - The causes and events of the Civil War throughout Britain;
 - The English Reformation and Counter Reformation (Henry VIII to Mary I);
 - Society, economy and culture across the period: for example work and leisure in town and country, religion and superstition in daily life, theatre, art, music and literature.
- A local history study; non-statutory examples include:
 - A depth study linked to one of the British areas of study listed above;

- A study over time, testing how far sites in their locality reflect aspects of national history (some sites may predate 1066);
- At least one study of a significant society or issue in world history and its interconnections with other world developments.

4.3 Opportunities for developing the learning and participation offer

We are mindful that a learning programme to complement a renewed offer at the Commandery should be developed alongside the planning of the exhibition and interpretation of the collections and building to ensure the learning programme can complement the Commandery's offer.

Volunteers are a key resource to assist with the realisation of opportunities, the delivery of an increased number of learning activities as well as school visits. There are a number of activities that volunteers could assist with, including preparing for school/group visits, delivering informative talks to visitors/school groups as part of a tour, getting the resources ready, getting the lunch space set up as well as supporting holiday and weekend activities, such as quizzes, trails, craft activities and costumed interpretation and undertaking research.

4.3.1 Schools

There is significant opportunity to grow school visits. We have identified some initial ways in which this could be achieved.

Repeat visits are key and these could be encouraged for individual pupils by offering incentives to pupils who return with their families, such as vouchers, loyalty stamps, badges etc.

Promoting the offer to school teachers is key; the delivery of teacher/family days would enhance this by enabling teachers of local schools to bring their own families to the Commandery to trial workshops and learning activities to sample what is on offer.

We outlined the opportunities that the new curriculum presents, one of which is to develop an in depth local history study, which can be used to attract and incentivise local schools. In addition the Commandery could also develop an offer that reflects local schools' 'themed weeks', which are typically during the Autumn, or the summer (after SATS), both of which are popular times for school visits.

The Commandery has, on occasions, partnered with other local heritage organisations to deliver a bespoke learning package to meet schools' individual needs, this has included partnering with the George Marshall Museum to deliver a day focused on Medieval medicine.

This is an area that could be developed to increase the scope of the Commandery's learning offer, as well as the City's capacity to accommodate larger groups. For example, partnerships could be developed with the Cathedral, the Hive, the Infirmary and Greyfriar's, as well as the George Marshall Museum.

The Cathedral, which we understand has recently had a new learning space developed, has some themes in common with the Commandery, for example the battle between Church and Crown; the wrestle of power between state and parliament (both of which are new curriculum themes); and also as the resting place of King John and Prince Arthur there is considerable scope to develop learning packages in partnership.

There are other learning themes that fit with the new curriculum that could be developed, these include Medieval life and medicine (using the medicinal herb garden that is soon to be planted), as well as using the 1275 model of Worcester City to illustrate what Medieval life in the City may have been like.

4.3.2 Community engagement

Staff at the Commandery have well established relationships with a number of local groups and stakeholders - the Battle of Worcester Society, the Commandery's Friends Group, Worcester Live and Fright Night - who contribute to delivering a wide ranging events programme including talks, lectures, tours, ghost walks and participative events, such as quizzes. There is scope for the Commandery to develop its own programme of events and talks. Staff members with specialist knowledge could deliver "Meet the Expert"/special interest talks.

Staff are in the process of developing short talks for visitors, which will be held in the more significant rooms, for example the Painted Chamber and the Great Hall. The times of the talks will be published on the website and at front of house to encourage those visitors who are interested in finding out more information to attend. This is also an area that volunteers could become involved in. Once this has been established it could be adapted to be offered to schools.

There are a number of learning themes and activities that could be developed throughout the building to engage families and general visitors. For example 'building detectives' as a theme could engage both children and families, through an activity sheet as they go through the building, together with and a more advanced trail with an explanatory interpretation for adult visitors. 'The building as witness' is another theme that could be adopted throughout the building, providing visitors with an understanding of the momentous events that the Commandery has witnessed.

Other learning opportunities/activities to involve and engage the community include:

- Community involvement in historic planting in the current gardens, as well as in the development of a Medieval herb garden and a community garden. Once developed it could be used as a formal and informal learning resource for schools and groups as well as enhancing the overall interpretation offer.
- Costumed interpretation could become a regular feature, for example on the last Sunday of the month, and listed on the website to encourage visits from young families.
- The development of family and adult guide books present an opportunity to promote learning and enhance visitor's engagement and understanding of the building.
- Explorer packs could also be made available for families, to enhance children's interaction with the building and its interpretation.

- A debating feature, reflecting the democracy theme of the Commandery's history could be developed that would engage schools and other groups/ general visitors. Questions could be set in advance (by visiting schools/groups) and displayed daily on an interactive wall (similar to that used in the Anne Frank Museum). This would enable all visitors to engage with the theme, with visitors voting interactively. Debating societies/competitions could hold their meetings/events at the Commandery; universities, sixth form colleges and higher education may also use the Commandery as a centre for debating.

In order to increase learning opportunities, broaden access and increase community engagement multi sensory interpretation should be explored. The re-interpretation of the building presents an exciting opportunity to work with organisations that have first hand experience, for example Worcester College for the Blind was established in the Commandery in 1866. One strand of the current audio trail interprets this period of the Commandery's history.

Youth groups and forums could also be used to develop areas of the Commandery's offer, for example in designing a guide book, or trails for the building, such as 'Building Detectives' for general visitors that could be purchased from the shop/ admissions desk.

4.3.3 Partnership working

In addition to the potential partnerships that we set out above for developing the learning programmes for schools, there is also scope to develop a partnership with the University; this would enable specialist interest/academic events on the theme of the Civil War to be hosted by the University at the Commandery.

The Commandery has established a relationship with a number of the University's academic departments, including the history and drama departments; the drama and heritage module is research and performance based. Work experience is also offered and there is an opportunity to extend work experience opportunities to Worcester College and the Technology College.

A partnership with the Hive may increase the breadth of the learning offer and encourage adult learning groups to visit, as they could access academic resources at the Hive, which would support learning.

4.3.4 Constraints

We have identified a number of constraints to growing the schools market and considered ways of overcoming them.

The cost of coaches is a barrier for schools; the Commandery's offer needs to be sufficiently persuasive for schools to deploy their limited number of trips to include the Commandery.

Although the Commandery does accommodate more than 60 pupils, this is not ideal - pupils have to go on a city tour by rotation. Environmental conditions in the building exacerbate this limitation - there are only two rooms that are suitably heated for

learning spaces. Temporary spaces could accommodate larger groups on certain days (for example a school with a three or four class year group), but the temperature of the rooms does not allow for this level of flexibility. Partnership working with other heritage providers in the City would help to ameliorate capacity issues.

Communicating the offer to schools is currently challenging. Individual brochures (for each Museum Worcestershire venue) should be developed to ensure the offers are conveyed clearly. The current website provision is not sufficiently informative, nor does it target schools; anecdotally schools find it difficult to find the information they require from the website.

Social media is currently a missed opportunity; a twitter feed, blog, event listings, apps and responses from schools could all be used to greater effect as marketing tools.

When planning and developing the learning offer, it is important to be mindful of any potential conflict between schools and general visitors; both in terms of content and interpretation, but also with regard to visitor flow, noise levels, dwell times and activity spaces.

Worcester City Council

A development and business plan for the Commandery

5 Baseline assessment and identification of opportunities - income generation

5.1 Income generation now

The table below sets out recent years' levels of income generation and this year's budgets.

	4 year average: 2011/12 2014/15	Budget 2015/16
Admissions	17,750	£36,400
Learning	13,000	
Shop sales	11,000	£17,000
Hires	8,000	£10,000
Events	1,500	
Donations and misc	1,400	£1,100
Total	£52,650	£64,500

The current achievement is modest, the root cause of the low income levels currently being achieved is the low number of visitors. Admission charges are generating only around £17,750 a year for two reasons: there are only around 10,500 tour visitors to the Commandery a year (seven year average, 2007/14, 10,539); and Worcester City Council residents (two out of five visitors) are not charged entry.

Schools account for around 2,500 visits a year and have generated an average of £13,000 a year over the last four years.

Secondary visitor spend is low too:

- The current spend per visitor in the shop, including schools visits, is around 60p, significantly below the comparator average of £1. The profit is marginal if all costs are deducted, in part because the average margin is low at 37 - 40%, again below comparator average of 50%. Our recommendations for improving spend per visitor are in the section detailing opportunities.
- The lack of a cafe is also obviously denting potential secondary spend. This issue will be addressed this year and, based on 10% of sales, income projections for this year based on six months' opening are £1,430.

Hires include Fright Nights, Shakespeare at the Commandery, Ghost Walks, occasional wedding receptions and other room hire:

- We understand that the financial arrangements with Worcester Live, who are responsible for both Shakespeare at the Commandery and Ghost Walks, are below market rates.
- The Fright Nights arrangements are considered by staff at the Commandery to work well in all respects, including the financial arrangements.

- As well as hosting occasional wedding receptions, Museums Worcestershire staff have done lots of research on the potential for developing a weddings business at the Commandery, but in order to get it off the ground some investment is required; this we discuss further when we go on to assess income potential.
- Similarly, the potential to develop a meetings hire strand is discussed below.

Events income includes charges for craft activities during holiday periods and similar events throughout the year. Charging for these activities has only recently been introduced, first at £1 but during this last year at £2, basically to cover the cost of materials.

5.2 Income generation - opportunities

5.2.1 Admissions income

The essential first step is to drive up visitor numbers and that is the purpose of this development plan. The next important requirement is to devise an appropriate new pricing structure to reflect the new offer. Related, but separate, is the issue of whether free entry to Worcester residents is sustainable and, if not, ensuring that the new pricing structure includes an offer to Worcester residents that is fair all round.

Our recommendations for improving the visitor offer are designed to present opportunities to drive up numbers of all types of visitors, including schools visits, and potentially to reach new visitor markets - people living further away, including international visitors.

Work has already been done on growing audiences and pricing structures ('The Commandery Marketing Strategy' and 'The Commandery Pricing Plan', Blue Sail, March 2014). This work was done in the context of a somewhat different set of proposals for developing the offer at the Commandery but these have sufficient similarity with the current proposals for this work to remain relevant to these proposals. Key conclusions from the marketing strategy work that make sense in the context of these proposals include:

- The Commandery should directly target family, boomer and educational segments living within a 45-60 minute travel time;
- The Commandery should work in partnership to reach tourism markets (day trippers and staying visitors, including VFRs);
- The focus on the Battle of Worcester presents an opportunity to target a specialist market too;
- There is potential to work in partnership with other heritage attractions in the City, including the Cathedral and Greyfriars (National Trust).

We have referred already in earlier sections to the strong heritage links with the Cathedral and the Cathedral is Worcester's best known and most visited heritage attraction. The Cathedral and the Commandery are also only a short walk apart. In these circumstances, there should be much to be gained by further developing the heritage links between the Cathedral and the Commandery, thereby encouraging visitors to the Cathedral to discover the Commandery as well.

Visits to Greyfriars are much lower. An accurate figure is not available because the National Trust do not publish figures for visits to attractions that receive fewer than 50,000 visits a year. Nonetheless the National Trust has a strong brand compatible with the Commandery's offer and Greyfriars is one of the buildings that would have existed at the time of the Battle of Worcester and so partnership working would be advantageous.

The pricing plan recommends:

- An increase in price across all categories;
- Introduction of charging for Worcester City Council residents, though at a reduced rate and once only in any year;
- Introduction of children go free;
- Reduction in age related concessions;
- Introduction of a Visitor Pass to include entry to multiple Worcester heritage attractions.

We endorse all these principles, but consider that price increases might be phased to reflect the phased improvements to the offer. The first phase will introduce the Battle of Worcester experience in a discrete area of the Commandery and, possibly, the Presidents' offer (see section 7); the remainder of the building will be relatively unaltered until other phases are completed and, if our recommendations are adopted for limiting the visitor route, the overall scale of the offer will be reduced. If the priority is to increase visitor numbers, we consider that a modest increase in the price at the point that the Battle of Worcester attraction is introduced might be the best strategy.

The table below sets out current charges, the Blue Sail recommendations, and our recommendations for revising the pricing structure:

Admission Charges	Now	Blue sail	DCA
Adults	5.50	6.95	5.95
Adult concession	4.50	5.95	4.95
Students 17+	4.50	Free	4.95
Children 5-16	2.50	Free	Free
Family Ticket (Up to 2 adults & 3 children)	13.00	None	None
Children under 5	Free	Free	Free
Worcester residents	Free	5.00	4.95
Season ticket WCC	6.00	5.00	4.95
Season ticket other			5.95
Group - adult (10 people) (guided tour /talk extra)	4.50	5.95	5.50
Group - concession (10 people) (guided tour /talk extra)	3.50	5.95	4.50
Group - child	2.30	Free	Free
Worcester pass		19.50	
Guided Tour/Talk (Daytime) Per Group	50.00		
School visit including performance	6.00		
School visit/children's activity including booked workshops	4.50		4.50
Drop-in activities (in addition to admission fee)	£1 - £5	2 min	

The earlier work also estimates the amount by which visitor numbers might be expected to increase were the offer improved in the way planned at that time, and the marketing strategy and new pricing structure to be implemented. We have reviewed these estimates and, in the light of the revised plan for improving the offer and our suggestions for moderating the price increases, our estimates for increases in visitor numbers are:

- Year 1 (2016/17) - overall visitor numbers might be expected to increase by 75%, except for Worcester City Council residents for whom new charges would have been introduced and for whom we estimate a reduction to 75% of current numbers. This compares with Blue Sail estimates of 50% up in year 1 and WCC residents down to 75% of pre-charging levels. Our assumptions suggest visitors to tour the Commandery would rise from around 10,500 to around 13,500.
- Year 2 - we would expect visitor numbers to have doubled, with the exception of Worcester City Council residents for whom we estimate a return to current levels. This compares with Blue Sail estimates of 80% up in year 2 and WCC residents at 90% of pre-charging levels. Our assumptions suggest visitors to tour the Commandery would rise to around 16,000.
- Year 3 - we would expect visitor numbers to rise again, but by a smaller percentage than in the previous two years. We have adopted the percentage rise against baseline as set out in the Blue Sail pricing work, so that by year 3 visitors from outside Worcester would have risen by a further 15% and visitors from Worcester would rise by a further 8%. Our assumptions suggest visitors to tour the Commandery would rise to around 17,000.

Our estimates predict £46,100 of admissions income net of VAT in year 1, £55,060 in year 2 and £59,254 in year 3.

We recommend that by year 4 further improvements in the offer should have been implemented to encourage new and more repeat visits, and potentially to sustain a further increase in admission charges.

5.2.2 Learning and participation

The learning offer at the Commandery is well established and strong, and successfully adjusting to the requirements of the new national curriculum. As we explain in section 4, there is plenty more opportunity both in the mainstream schools market and in the wider area of informal learning and community engagement.

However there are, as we explain above, constraints to fully achieving this potential. This development plan will go a considerable way towards addressing these: improvements to interpretation will strengthen the schools offer, particularly for Keystage 3 pupils; improvements to environmental conditions in parts of the building will increase flexibility for the use of space; development of the Commandery brand and more effective marketing to schools will make for clearer messaging. We suggest that on site capacity to deliver to schools and the wider community could be developed through a volunteer programme.

As there is some capacity building required, we have been modest in our estimates for increased numbers of schools visits in years 1 and 2: from current levels of around

2400 a year, we have projected 3,250 in 2016/17 and 3,500 in year 2, with pricing remaining as it is now.

We have calculated these increases on the basis that, once school holidays and half terms have been discounted, there are 39 weeks in the school year, giving 195 teaching days; we recognise that some of these days may be lost due to teacher training, SATS exams, etc. but these are minimal. The current number of visits by school pupils (2,400 per year) is proportionate to a class of 30 pupils visiting on 41% of school days; however 3,250 school pupils is proportionate to a class of 30 pupils visiting on 55% of school days; and 3,500 school pupils is proportionate to a class of 30 pupils visiting on 60% of school days. In summary, we are forecasting an increase of 14% in year 1 (2016/17) and 19% (from the current levels; a 5% increase from year 1 levels) in year 2 (2017/18).

Given that a good proportion of schools bring two or more classes in one trip, this does not actually mean that the Commandery will be receiving a separate school on 55% and 60% of school days. Given the size of the Commandery's local catchment area: there are 176 primary schools (23 of which are Academies); 20 middle schools (six of which are Academies); and 29 secondary schools (24 of which are Academies), with a total of 23,856 Keystage 2 pupils and 16,602 Keystage 3 pupils on roll in Worcestershire, coupled with the geographically large catchment area that schools travel from (in recent years schools have travelled from as far afield as Stoke-on-Trent, Wolverhampton, Walsall, Leicester, Much Wenlock, Monmouth, Stroud and Cardiff) we feel that this increase in numbers is realistic.

The re-interpretation of the Commandery and the introduction of the new curriculum with its focus on the English Civil War theme, 'local history and local stories', the struggle between Church and Crown, the Magna Carta and the emergence of Parliament, as well as the continued popularity of the 'Tudor Times' theme, give the Commandery a strong basis on which to develop a persuasive education offer.

5.2.3 Cafe

Cafes do not in themselves tend to generate significant income, but they play an important role in making the overall visitor offer more attractive and in extending dwell time. The Commandery is a very large building and the proposals in here recommend that the visitor offer is more differentiated than it is at the moment, with different stories being told in different parts of the building. A cafe will be a natural way of creating breaks between different experiences, as well as more generally enhancing visitors' experience.

Visitors last year were very appreciative of the cafe pilot and it attracted people on the canal and towpath too, some of whom then went on to tour the Commandery. There were over 1,000 cafe users in August. The pilot was not expected to make money and didn't. This year there is to be an external operator and our recommendation is that the Commandery seeks to contract with the operator to take a percentage of sales in the region of 10%. Once fully contracted out the operation of the cafe should not absorb staff time as it did last year.

This type of arrangement is projected to generate only a modest income stream in this year (April to September) but, if it is successful, sales will build up in subsequent years and it may prove worthwhile to extend the period of the year it is open, say from February half term to the end of October. Income to the Commandery might then be expected to rise to around £3,500 - £4,000 a year. (See appendix 5.)

5.2.4 Shop

Reconfiguring and restocking the shop is an immediate priority.

Its great location, meaning that it is encountered by visitors both on arrival and departure and is visible from the street, and its overall size, mean that it has the potential to command good sales.

Restocking and new approaches to visual merchandising will make a significant difference and could be achieved for a modest outlay.

Our projections, with specialist input from Quince Retail, are that spend per visitor could be increased to at least the comparator average of £1. Visitors include those visiting to tour the building and a range of other visitors, e.g. school visits and people just visiting the shop. This increase in income per visitor, together with the projected increases in visitors, will mean that income from the shop should rise to at least £20,000 in 2016/17 with modest increases thereafter.

5.2.5 Hires and events

The size and layout of the Commandery and its garden mean that there is a wide range of income generating activity that would work. At the moment the visitor route is, in our view, too long. Our proposals for focusing stories in defined areas of the building go a long way towards addressing this issue; this approach will naturally take parts of the building off the visitor route.

At ground floor on the garden side, room 24 plays no part in the planned visitor route and, as work carried out by Museums Worcestershire staff already shows, room 24 would make a suitable space for smaller wedding ceremonies and receptions. Its immediate access to the garden is an added strength.

At first floor level on the garden side, rooms 7, 8, 9 and 10 form no part of the planned visitor route. These rooms and the attics above them could be separated off more fully and made into a holiday let with its own front door.

At first floor level on the canal side, education spaces could potentially be made more multi purpose and used to hire for meetings and adult training.

The Great Hall is already used for events, and these uses might be further extended to include larger wedding ceremonies and receptions and evening dinners and parties. The use of this space for daytime events would, of course, impact on the space being available for regular visitors, so would need carefully managing. However, the new entrance to the Battle of Worcester story, and a possible alternative entry to the

route to the Painted Chamber from behind the shop, means that joint use is not ruled out.

The garden is also already used for events, like Shakespeare at the Commandery. However, we understand that at the moment these events are not remunerative for the Commandery.

Catering and hires consultants, Kendrick Hobbs, have assessed the potential for weddings, meetings/training sessions and parties and estimate these together to generate an income to the Commandery of around £15,000 a year, including a 10% commission on outside caterers' charges. These estimates are based on 10 weddings, 20 meetings and 4 large events hiring the Great Hall, which should be achievable for 2016. (See appendix 5.)

Purcell Architects have looked at the potential to convert rooms 7 to 10 and the attics above to create a holiday let and have provided initial sketches for a range of options (see appendix 6). The investment required is substantial and the permissions required would mean a fairly lengthy development period. Nonetheless discussions with the Vivat Trust might be initiated sooner to test market interest and explore the options available to take this part of the project forward.

5.3 Overall income generation potential

The potential for growing income and the associated increases in costs are all set out in the business plan, section 7.

6 An assessment of conditions at the Commandery

6.1 Environmental conditions

We were advised at the outset that the environmental conditions at the Commandery limit what can be displayed outside sealed cases. In brief summary, the issues are: damp; raised relative humidity levels caused in part by the damp; temperature below visitor comfort levels.

Accordingly we commissioned Purcell, conservation architects, to review the environmental conditions at the Commandery and advise. Their letter of advice is attached as appendix 7. Below we summarise that advice and the estimated costs associated with addressing the issues that are most pressing.

Recommended approach to addressing these issues:

1. Whilst the architects have been able to identify probable causes of damp in the areas inspected, these damp issues require further investigation before the causes and, therefore, the remedies can be fully determined.
2. The preliminary assessment is that the damp issues do not require urgent attention, though they will in the medium term, not only to protect the fabric of the building, but also to help manage humidity levels.
3. Management of temperature and humidity levels will require the installation of conservation heating, which could be either electrical or water based.

In view of the budget and priorities, the recommended approach in this phase is to:

1. Install electrical heating attached to humidity sensors in the areas planned for immediate redevelopment (the Battle of Worcester route and the Great Hall). This will improve visitor comfort and enable some control of humidity levels in these areas.
2. Commission further investigation of the causes of damp in the areas identified along the Battle of Worcester route and the Great Hall. It is recommended, but not essential, that this work is commissioned in this phase of work.

Work recommended in this phase	Estimated costs
Full investigation of causes of damp in priority areas	£11,765
Development work for installation of heating in priority areas	£10,085
Submitting proposals for Listed Building Consent, Building Control and tendering scheme	£10,000 to £20,000
Cost of electrical heating installation in priority areas	£30,000 to £50,000
TOTAL	£61,850 to £91,850

Timing:

In order to ensure that this work specified for phase 1 is completed for a May 2016 opening, instructions to proceed should be issued to the architects in May 2015.

Work recommended in Phase 2	Estimated costs
Damp remedial works in priority areas	£50,000 to £100,000
Development work relating to conversion of rooms to holiday let	£3,410
Conversion to holiday let	£300,000 - £600,000

6.2 Security

To follow

7 Business planning

We have provided two capital and revenue plans, which we explain in this section; one we describe as the ‘lower end of the investment range’, where the capital spend comes in at the level already committed and the other, which we describe as the ‘higher end of the investment range’, where the investment is higher and makes a somewhat more marked impact on the revenue plan.

7.1 Capital plan

The capital plan at the lower level of the investment range provides:

1. £75,000 for new interpretation (estimated to realise). Primarily, the Battle of Worcester experience, some introductory interpretation to sit in the Great Hall and a modest amount of on-street interpretation to strengthen the Battle of Worcester heritage trail. This figure includes design, manufacture and installation.
2. £32,000 for brand and website development and a marketing campaign leading up to the re-launch.
3. £7,500 for reconfiguring the shop and installing an EPOS system. The stock budget for the current year would be used to revise the current shop offer with the current stock being displayed a well. Across the project period (2016/19) the stock budget would increase in line with the improvement in shop sales (covered in the revenue budget).
4. £5,000 to reconfigure the shop front to reflect the new offer.
5. £60,085 for building works, the lower end of the estimate set out in the previous section, less the sum for damp investigation, which we suggest might be paid from regular maintenance spend, plus an estimate for £10,000 for improvements to security (this may require adjustment once the security expert’s report is provided).
6. £20,000 for professional fees already committed.

The capital plan at the higher end of the investment range additionally provides:

1. An additional £15,000 for new interpretation to realise plans for the Presidents’ display.
2. An additional £30,000 for building works, the top end of the range set out in the previous section. When Purcell carried out their survey, the Presidents’ rooms were not part of the equation, so the estimates do not include these rooms. Accordingly, having capacity to address the heating and humidity issues in these spaces is dependent on the other work coming out at the lower end of the estimate. In other words, the higher end of the investment range may prove to be an under-estimate. To tighten up on this estimate, Purcell would need to return and survey this area.

3. £15,000 to set up for events, mainly weddings in room 24 adjacent to the garden.

7.2 Revenue plan

The revenue plans at the upper and lower ends of the investment range are based on the same estimates for visitors and the same prices. There might, in practice, be a slightly higher number of visitors for the fuller offer, including the Presidents, but we are being cautious at this stage. Our estimates for increases in visitors are explained in section 5.2.1.

Education visits are also based on the same estimates of numbers of visits at the upper and lower ends of investment. Again the upper end of investment might support a slightly higher increase in numbers. Our estimates for increases are explained in section 5.2.2.

The key difference between the higher and lower levels of investment in terms of income generation is that the higher end enables more events, including weddings, which supports a growth in income of £14,500 in year 1 and nearly £20,000 by year 3. Details of this income are explained in section 5.2.5 and appendix 5.

Cafe and shop income are the same in both models and are explained in sections 5.2.3 and 5.2.4.

Expenditure in some areas increases to support the new activity, particularly marketing and events. These are set out as additional lines in the business plan, other lines are based on existing costs with increases for inflation only.

The net effect of projected increases in income at the lower level of investment is that by year 3 net income would have increased by £25,500 and at the higher level of investment by £37,000.

The following pages set out the two capital and revenue plans in summary.

The Commandery - Worcester City Council		DCA Consultants		
FINANCIAL SUMMARY	Lower end of investment range		May 2015	
Year	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Project Expenditure	Lower			
Interpretation:	75,000			
Brand and website development, marketing campaign	32,000			
Shop: EPOS, reconfigure	7,500			
Front window	5,000			
Building works - rooms 14-20 and Great Hall	60,085			
Events set up	-			
Professional fees (DCA, Purcell, Scribble & Nonsense)	20,000			
Total	199,585			
Consequent revenue plan				
Income	Budget			
Admissions	23,400	46,100	55,060	59,254
Educational visits	13,000	15,683	18,369	21,060
Hires and events	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Retail sales	17,000	20,000	23,500	27,613
Café income	-	2,500	3,500	4,000
Donations and miscellaneous	1,100	1,400	1,700	2,100
Total	64,500	95,683	112,129	124,026
Expenditure				
Existing staffing	219,912	222,111	224,332	226,576
Additional staffing: marketing		12,000	12,240	6,242
Premises	86,820	90,544	91,450	92,364
Overheads	32,400	33,989	35,804	37,896
Additional marketing expenditure	-	13,600	10,100	10,100
Total	339,132	372,245	373,927	373,178
Operating balance	(274,632)	(276,562)	(261,798)	(249,152)
Variation on baseline	-	(1,930)	12,834	25,480
Cumulative variation on baseline	-	(1,930)	10,904	36,385

The Commandery - Worcester City Council		DCA Consultants		
FINANCIAL SUMMARY	Upper end of investment range			May 2015
Year	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Project Expenditure	Upper			
Interpretation:	90,000			
Brand and website development, marketing campaign	32,000			
Shop: EPOS, reconfigure	7,500			
Front window	5,000			
Building works - rooms 14-20 and Great Hall	90,085			
Events set up	15,000			
Professional fees (DCA, Purcell, Scribble & Nonsense)	20,000			
Total	259,585			
Consequent revenue plan				
Income	Budget			
Admissions	23,400	46,100	55,060	59,254
Educational visits	13,000	15,683	18,369	21,060
Hires and events	10,000	24,500	27,000	29,755
Retail sales	17,000	20,000	23,500	27,613
Café income	-	2,500	3,500	4,000
Donations and miscellaneous	1,100	1,400	1,700	2,100
Total	64,500	110,183	129,129	143,782
Expenditure				
Existing staffing	219,912	222,111	224,332	226,576
Additional staffing: events and marketing		20,000	20,000	14,242
Premises	86,820	90,544	91,450	92,364
Overheads	32,400	33,989	35,804	37,896
Additional marketing expenditure	-	13,600	10,100	10,100
Total	339,132	380,245	381,687	381,178
Operating balance	(274,632)	(270,062)	(252,558)	(237,397)
Variation on baseline	-	4,570	22,074	37,235
Cumulative variation on baseline	-	4,570	26,644	63,880

8 Potential for developing the visitor economy

As we set out above, considerable opportunity has been identified to develop the overseas and domestic heritage markets, which will translate into a strengthened visitor economy and bring overall economic benefit to the City.

As also set out above the Commandery and the Civil War theme has considerable scope, together with the development of a combined heritage offer, to contribute to a strengthened visitor economy for Worcester.

The strategy to adopt a phased approach for re-interpreting and addressing the fabric of the Commandery building will make a significant contribution to the City's heritage offer and increase the potential to grow overseas and domestic heritage markets, both of which will translate into a strengthened visitor economy and economic benefit for Worcester.

In earlier sections we estimate the impact the improved offer at the Commandery will have on the number of visits. Whilst some of these are visits from Worcester residents, the majority are visits from outside the City; these visitors will explore, and spend money in, the wider City supporting food and drink, tourism, hotel/accommodation and retail businesses in and beyond Worcester, benefiting the local economy.

Whilst not easily quantifiable, the Commandery has the potential to play a wider economic role by contributing to a number of significant catalytic and strategic added value impacts in terms of raising the profile and reputation of the City, contributing to educational and community development impacts and enhancing the quality of life for Worcester's residents. These potential benefits could be considerable and further underline the potential significance of the Commandery's and Worcester's wider heritage offer to the visitor economy:

- An enhanced reputation for Worcester as a distinctive heritage city of regional standing and as a creative and energetic place, which in turn may attract talent and new business to Worcester;
- Increasing the profile of Worcester as a visitor destination;
- Promoting the quality of life in the City, with a more vibrant heritage, arts and cultural offer;
- Fostering community identification and cohesion and helping to integrate new members of the community as cities change in composition over time;
- Promoting the local communities' overall well-being by providing invaluable learning and volunteering opportunities for people of all ages (including regular and less frequent visitors and hard to reach audiences); and
- Increasing opportunities for participating in volunteering and opportunities to learn and develop new skills.



Worcester City Council

A development and business plan for the Commandery

Appendices

Worcester City Council

A development and business plan for the Commandery

Appendix 1: Floor plans



First Floor



Ground Floor

- collections workshop (& viewing) 2014
- rented out HLF 2015/16
- community/hire gallery 2014 + HLF
- civil war route HLF 2015/16 with increased displays earlier
- dressed rooms HLF 2015/16
- Hidden Commandery experience 2014 + HLF
- weddings 2014 with funding
- Orientation & signage HLF 2015/6

Worcester City Council

A development and business plan for the Commandery

Appendix 2: Images of museum shops



Scr!bble&Nonsense

Date: 19 March 2015

The Commandery

Realising the potential - retail





Scr!bble&Nonsense

Date: 19 March 2015

The Commandery

Realising the potential - retail





Scr!bble&Nonsense

Date: 19 March 2015

The Commandery

Realising the potential - retail



Worcester City Council

A development and business plan for the Commandery

Appendix 3: Interpretation ideas



The Commandery

Realising the potential – Battle of Worcester

Scr!bble&Nonsense

ROOM 14 (Royalist)

INITIAL VISUAL
View A





The Commandery

Realising the potential – Battle of Worcester

Scr!bble&Nonsense

ROOM 14 (Royalist)

INITIAL VISUAL

View B



Date: 19 March 2015



Scr!bble&Nonsense

Date: 19 March 2015

The Commandery

Realising the potential – Battle of Worcester

Scr!bble&Nonsense

ROOM 15 (Escape or Capture)

INITIAL VISUAL
View A





The Commandery

Realising the potential – Battle of Worcester

Scr!bble&Nonsense

ROOM 15 (Escape or Capture)

PREVIOUS EXAMPLES

Feature display cases



Date: 19 March 2015



Scr!bble&Nonsense

The Commandery

Realising the potential – Battle of Worcester

Scr!bble&Nonsense

ROOM 17 (Parliamentarian story)

INITIAL VISUAL
View A



Date: 19 March 2015

Worcester City Council

A development and business plan for the Commandery

Appendix 4: Initial visualisation of the Great Hall



The Commandery

Realising the potential – Orientation

Scr!bble&Nonsense

GREAT HALL (Introduction)

INITIAL VISUAL

View A



Date: 19 March 2015

Worcester City Council

A development and business plan for the Commandery

Appendix 5: Paper from catering consultant

The Commandery, Worcester

Café opportunity

- The café opportunity at the Commandery is potentially sound. This, in no small part, is due to the positioning of the café in spaces 34 and 35 towards the rear of the buildings as they interact directly with the Canal side path on one side and the Park on the other. This allows a café to promote itself to the general public and passer's by whom are likely to be a larger potential market than the 20,000 or so annual dedicated Museum visitors.
- The café is a small space but capable of housing 4/5 tables and 20 odd covers. There is a secondary space immediately beyond the main café area which is available for additional seating and a useful overflow for peak periods and during inclement weather.
- There are picnic benches outside by the canal already and ample space for more of these if demand were to dictate.
- The Commandery undertook a series of enabling works last year in order to provide a suitable setting for an external café operator. For example a service counter, additional electrical power and hand wash facilities were added.
- The café is largely ready to trade with the basic infrastructure in place.
- A local operator, My Coffee ran the café last year over a seven week period achieving the following sales:

Week ending	Net Sales	Commandery Net Total	No. of Transactions	Average Spend per Customer
27 Jul 2014	£115.43	£37.97	45	£3.41
03 Aug 2014	£746.00	£215.01	280	£3.43
10 Aug 2014	£656.73	£213.52	154	£5.65
17 Aug 2014	£588.99	£227.13	133	£6.14
24 Aug 2014	£521.62	£173.31	127	£5.47
31 Aug 2014	£600.91	£184.04	137	£5.73
07 Sep 2014	£340.11	£79.84	90	£4.67
Sub total:	£3,569.79	£1,130.82	966	£4.87

- Sales at £3,570 over the seven weeks equated to an average of £510 per week; a small sum by wider comparison but the café was welcomed by visitors.
- The overall exercise was not profitable for the Commandery due to set up costs and staff time required to support the operation. However, the team feel a café is beneficial but do not have the skills or resources to manage it themselves.

- Equally the relationship with the previous operator, My Coffee, has broken down.
- This season the Team have put the café opportunity out to tender and are in negotiation with a local operator who has expressed an interest to manage the café. The operator, called Café Afloat, run an operation from a Canal Barge close by in Diglis Basin.
- The intention is for them to run the service April – September over the next three years. Wisely there is a mutual ability to review the service at the end of this season.
- The Team have been discussing a profit share arrangement with Café Afloat; but as an alternative we have recommended to them that a sales share (based on a percentage of sales - not profits) may be a simpler and 'cleaner' option as it avoids the need to define and detail profits which can be problematic.
- In terms of sales potential and therefore return to the Commandery, we could reasonably expect:

Average weekly sales last year	£510
Forecast weekly sales this year	£550
April – September 26 weeks trading	£14,300
Commandery share at 10%	£1,430

- On this basis the Commandery could expect a return of some £1,400 over this summer season.
- If Café Afloat can develop the business this season and look to offer a service that can satisfy Museum visitors and the passing public they have the chance of being a good partner. There is no reason why, if the venture proves a success, the operator could not continue to trade into the Autumn.
- Returns for the Commandery are modest but there are broader benefits of having the café.
- To make the café truly viable it will need to increase its sales beyond to at least £1,000 per week in order to provide the operator with a reasonable income after costs which will be at least 50% of sales. We feel this level of sales is possible if the café can draw trade from the canal path.
- If the café were to trade for say 9 months/ year and achieve £35,000 - £40,000 in sales the Commandery could expect a return of some £3,500 - £4,000 pa. This would be the aspiration for 2016 and beyond.

Events opportunity

- The Commandery has a number of inherent advantages in its potential ability to run events:

- Unique historical fabric
- City Centre location
- Its scale being a large property
- An ability to dedicate spaces for event use (this is unusual at historic properties)
- Easy access to the rear of the building
- Some parking at the rear
- Potential accommodation in the holiday let

- The obvious opportunities are:

- Special interest group meetings/ events
- Small association meetings/AGM's
- Weddings: ceremonies (smaller groups up to 30) and receptions for larger groups
- Private parties/dinners

- There is a decent case for events at the Commandery but we agree with Angela Bishop in that these need a dedicated resource to foster, support and deliver. This resource need not be full time, in fact this is unlikely to be viable, in the short term.

- Weddings, in particular always need a dedicated point of contact.

- We have set out below a schedule of achievable types of events, frequencies and rates:

Type of Occasion	Source Market Sector	Events/ year	Room/ Hire fee	Hire fee	Avg' guests	Total guests	F&B element	F&B sales	F&B commission	Commandery Income
Meetings	City based/regional corporate + Associations & special interest groups	20	F31 - £100	£ 2,000	20	400	£ 5.00	£ 2,000	£ 200	£ 2,200
Dinners/ parties/ receptions	Corporate, Association or local groups & private Client	4	Great Hall - £1000	£ 4,000	80	320	£ 30.00	£ 9,600	£ 960	£ 4,960
Weddings	Private clients	10	F24 - £700	£ 7,000	30	300	£ 25.00	£ 7,500	£ 750	£ 7,750
Total		34		£ 13,000		1,020		£ 19,100	£ 1,910	£ 14,910

- On this basis the Commandery could achieve c £15,000 in income (achievable from 2016).

- This table assumes the following hire rates:

- F31 - £100 (for meeting type use; if this room was used for a wedding ceremony/reception rates would be higher).
- Great Hall - £1,000
- F24 & Gardens - £700

- The table assumes catering by a third party event caterer and a commission paid back to the Commandery of 10%; this is standard across the industry.
- What is noticeable from the table is that the profit potential is derived from the hires and not so much from the commission on catering.
- It is entirely possible the frequency of events could be built up and revenues increased.
- As Angela Bishop has identified in her earlier papers there will be a certain cost in setting up for events.
- Certain costs will include the licence and marketing. We know the licence is £1,500 covering three years.
- The other potential costs are:
 - Marketing
 - Staffing
 - Other equipment
- Initially it will be necessary to produce an online and a paper brochure. The exact costs of this would need to be finalised depending upon the type of brochure and print quantities.
- Staffing and supporting events will be the largest on-going costs. We would suggest a freelance events person is employed in two stages:
 - To work on a fixed term contract; part time to produce and deliver a marketing plan, brochure, on-line presence, plan for and attend wedding fairs etc. We would suggest this might be a six months appointment and 16 hours per week.
 - To work on a basic + commission basis to sell and support deliver events thereafter.
- The cost of this commitment will depend on how a relationship could be structured but the initial fixed term is likely to cost c £10,000. The future costs would need to be performance driven to some extent but realistically unlikely to be much less than the equivalent of the short term contract.
- In order to justify the investment in events sales and support resource the individual in question would need to build business to at least the level identified above, £15,000 and ideally higher.

- Finally, we have set out below a list of other equipment but some of this could be provided by external caterers, as required for events:

ITEM NO.	ITEM	BUDGET PRICE	NUMBER REQUIRED	TOTAL COST
1	Chairs	£ 100.00	50	£5,000
2	5" round banqueting tables for 8	£ 150.00	6	£900
3	Linen for tables	£ 20.00	16	£320
4	Glassware: highball glasses	£ 3.00	60	£180
5	Glassware: medium wine glasses	£ 4.00	60	£240
6	Glassware: champagne glasses	£ 5.00	60	£300
7	Glassware: serving jugs	£ 10.00	6	£60
8	Crockery: cups & saucers	£ 7.00	60	£420
9	Crockery: side plates	£ 5.00	60	£300
10	Teaspoons	£ 1.00	60	£60
12	License	£ 1,500.00	1	£1,500
13	Gazebo for garden	£ 1,000.00	1	£1,000
Sub total:				£10,280

Summary: café & events opportunity

- The Commandery has a reasonable opportunity to run a small café and some events and generate a profit.
- To achieve this they need a partner to help develop the café; hopefully the negotiations with Café Afloat will prove positive and they will be a good partner this season and beyond.
- Events are potentially profitable but there is a need to invest in packaging the offer in the first instance. This will require some capital investment. The first year is only likely to breakeven but thereafter a useful profit is achievable.
- Given the opportunity for Café Afloat and an events person to be recruited and set themselves up in 2015; we could hope for profits of up to £4,000 from the café and up to £5,000 from events from 2016. Events' business has the potential to become more profitable as it matures.

16th March 2015

kendrickhobbs

Worcester City Council

A development and business plan for the Commandery

Appendix 6: Initial ideas including holiday let



THE COMMANDERY
DCA CONSULTANTS
INITIAL IDEAS
MARCH 2015

1.1 ROOM 19

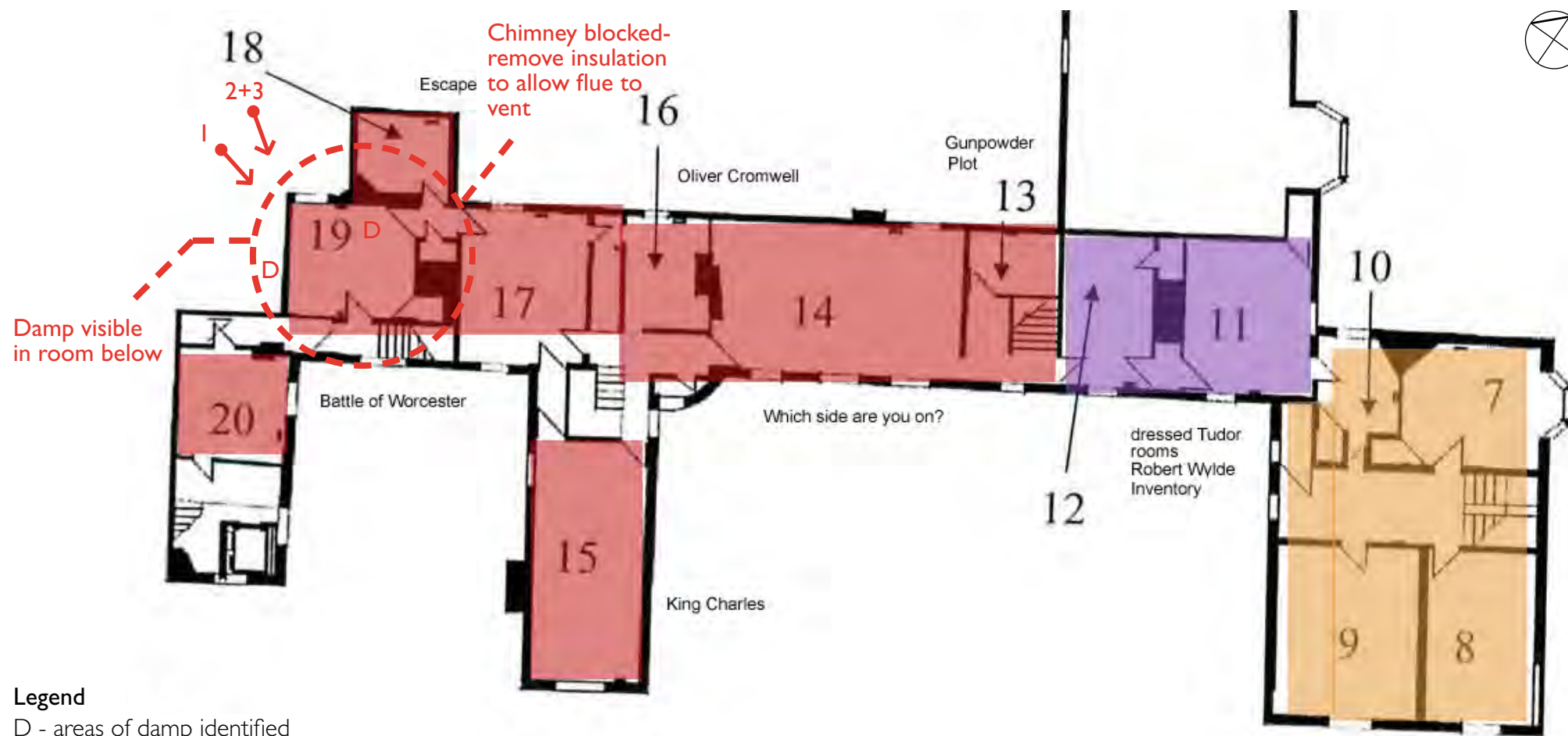
Condition

There are two areas of damp in room 19, one on the west wall that forms the gable end, and the other in the corner, where the room joins room 18. The damp extends into 22 below and is visible on all four elevations including around the chimney.

Externally, the west wall is constructed from a timber framed gable with render panels in between. This structure sits on top of a brick masonry wall. The brickwork is bowing and a lead weathering has been inserted to provide some weathering to the brickwork.

The west wall of the extension is also constructed from brickwork. There is an awkward gutter arrangement that discharges into a small hopper.

Room 18 is heated with electrical storage heaters, there are also storage heaters in 22 on the ground floor.



1. Damp visible internally
2. Unsatisfactory rainwater downpipe arrangement
3. Gable end- bulging brickwork evidence and large amounts of driving rain on elevation

Notes following survey with Lucy McCall and David Nash on 13th March

1.2 ROOM 15

Condition

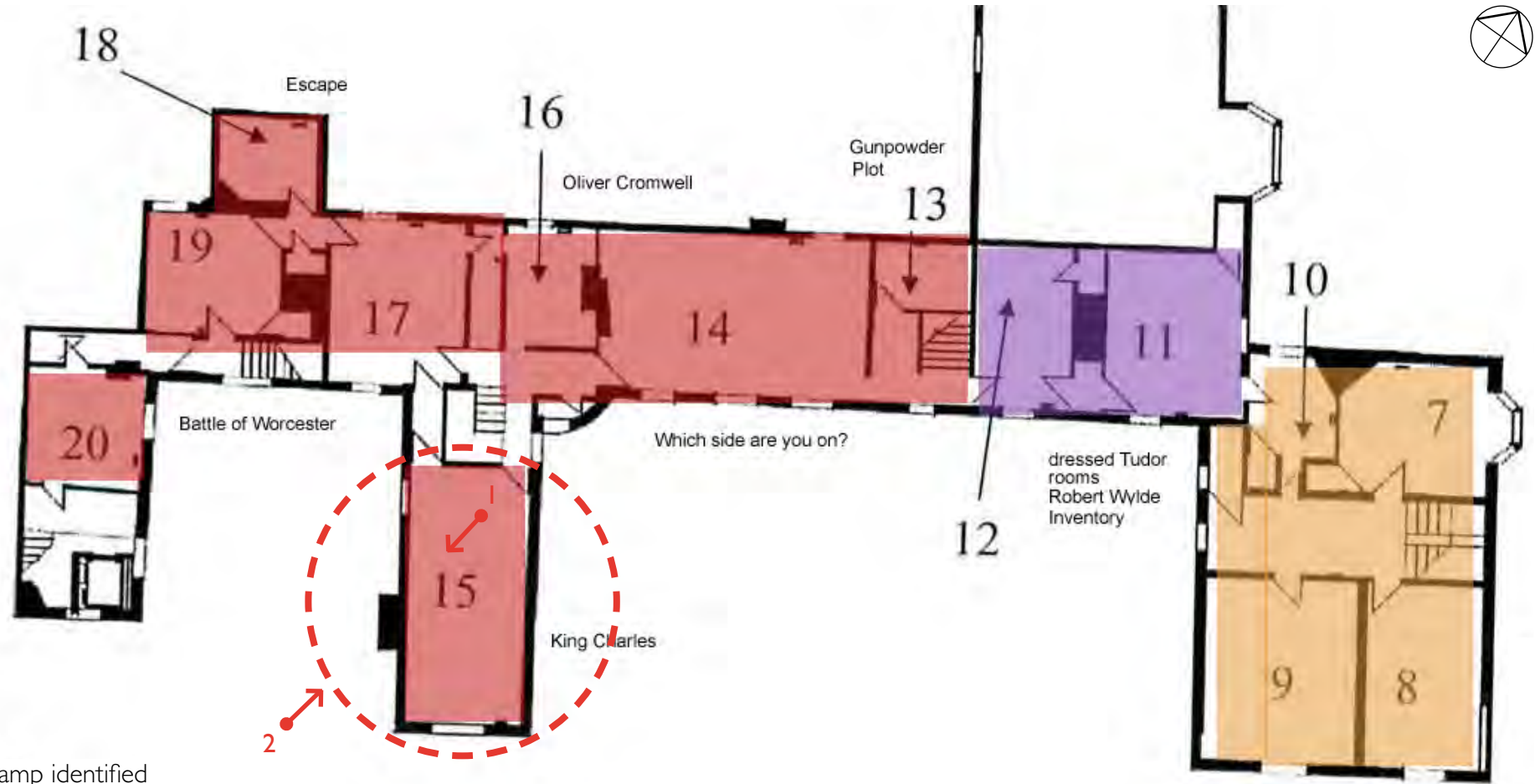
There is damp at high level in the west elevation of 15. Damp could not be seen in 24 below, as the walls are panelled and could therefore be concealing any problems.

There are two electric heaters in 15.

Externally there is a chimney stack next to the area of damp with a very small vent. The wall is constructed from facing brickwork decorated with an impervious paint, probably applied to reduce the amount of rainwater driving into the wall.



Legend
D - areas of damp identified

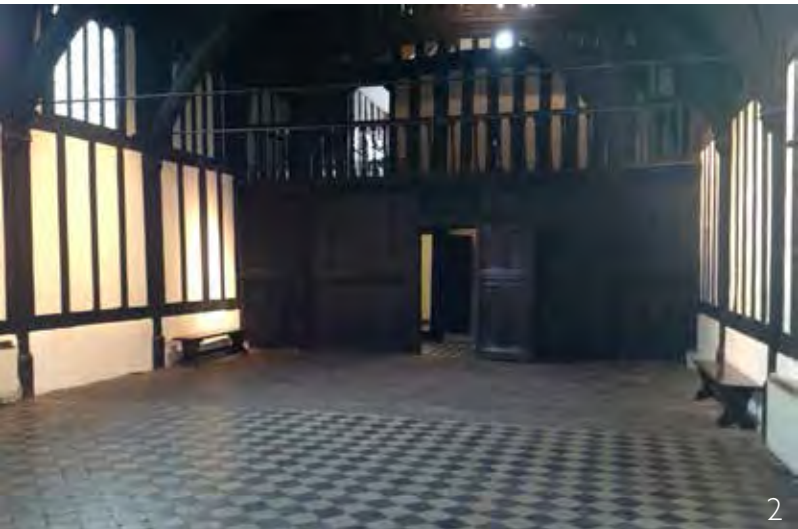


I.3 THE GREAT HALL

Condition

There is damp at low level in the west and east elevations of the Great Hall. The hall is constructed of a timber frame with plaster infill on top of a brick masonry plinth.

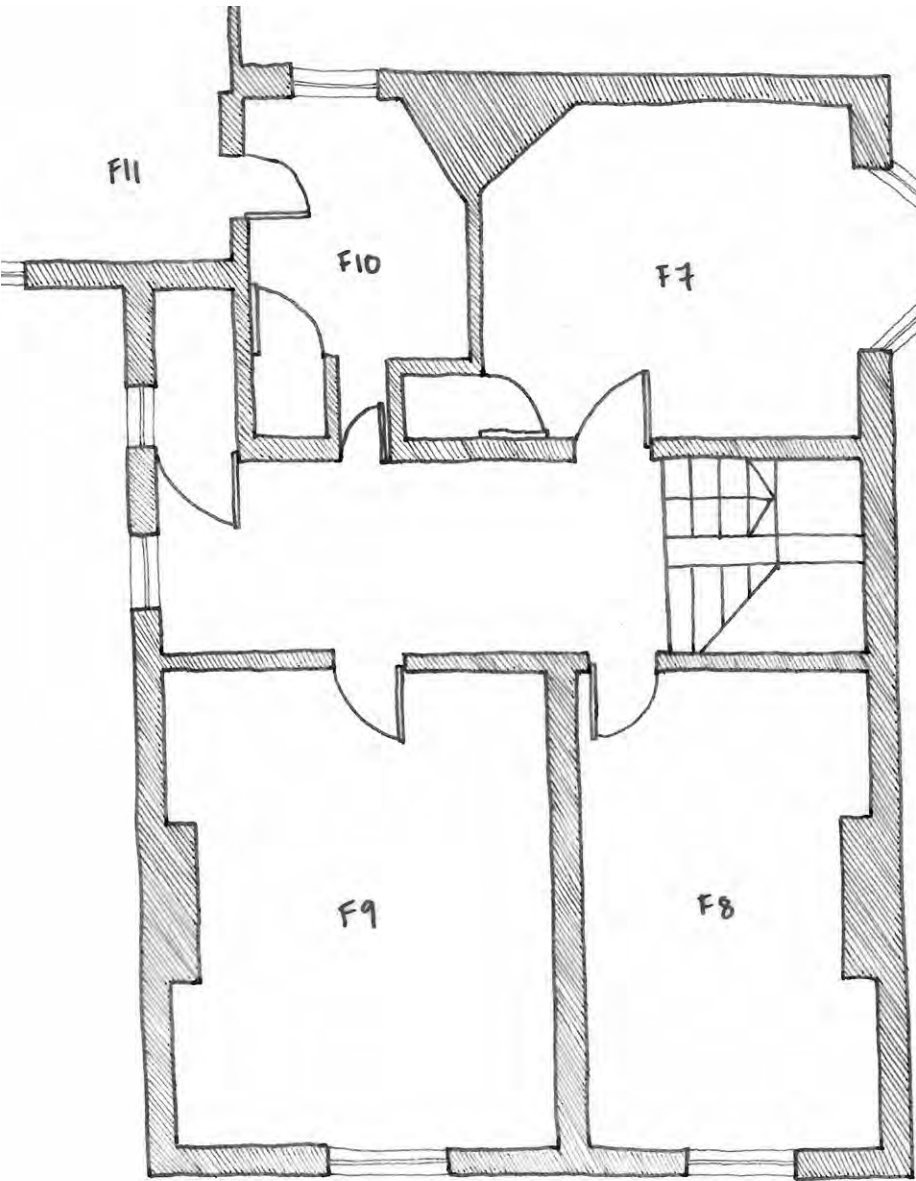
Salts in the east wall are causing disintegration of the plaster surface.



- 1. The Great Hall
- 2. The Great Hall
- 3. Damp to east wall. Salts causing disintegration of the surface

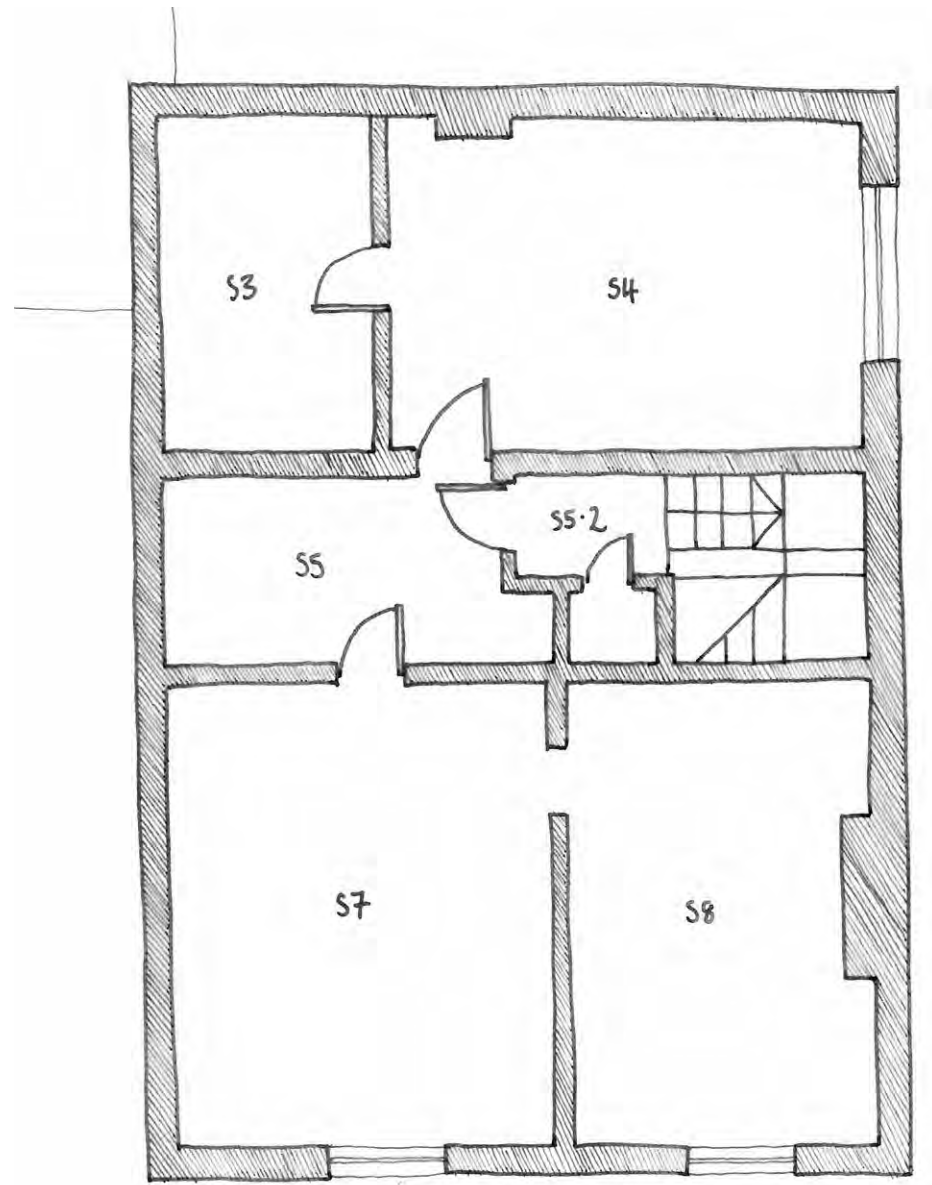
Notes following survey with Lucy McCall and David Nash on 13th March

2.1 EXISTING GENERAL ARRANGEMENT PLANS



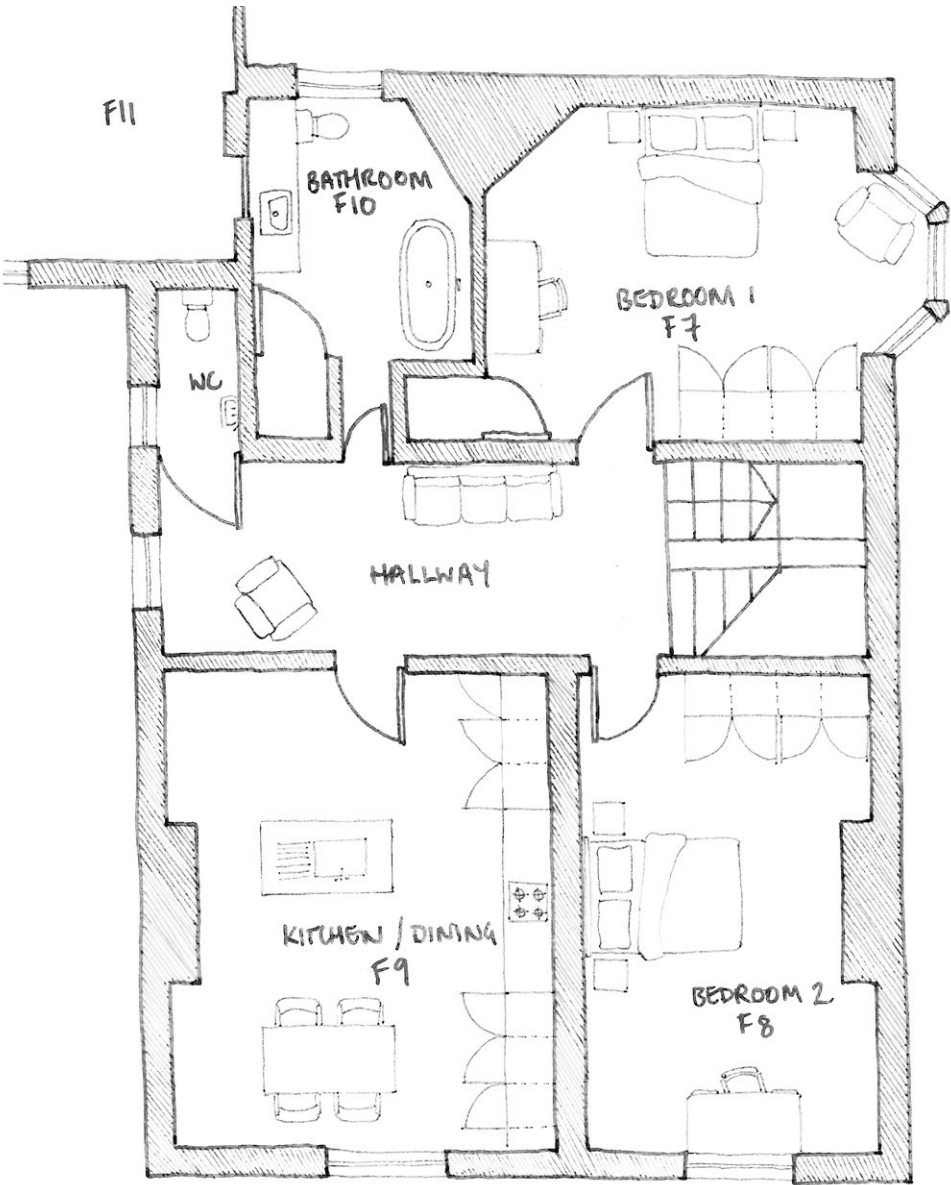
First Floor



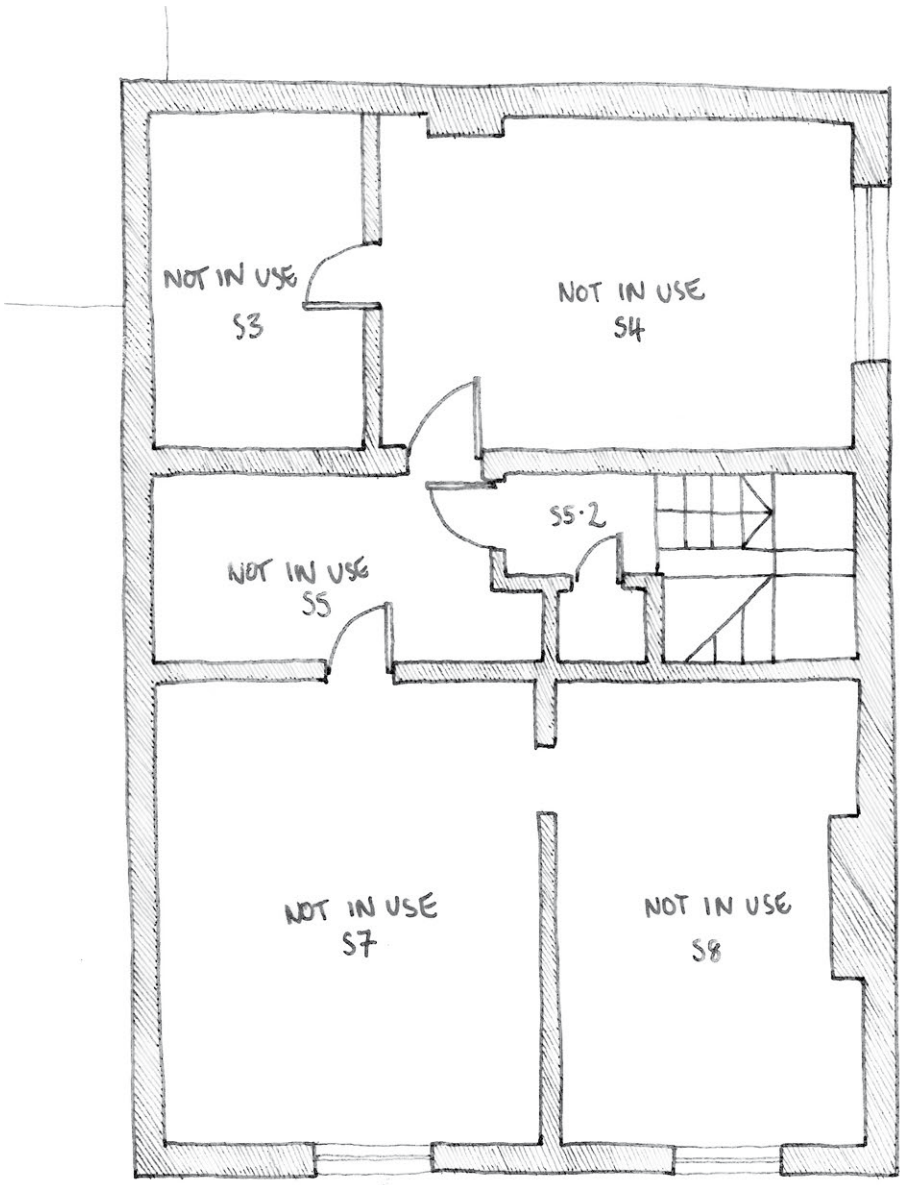


Second Floor

2.2 PROPOSED GENERAL ARRANGEMENT PLAN
OPTION I

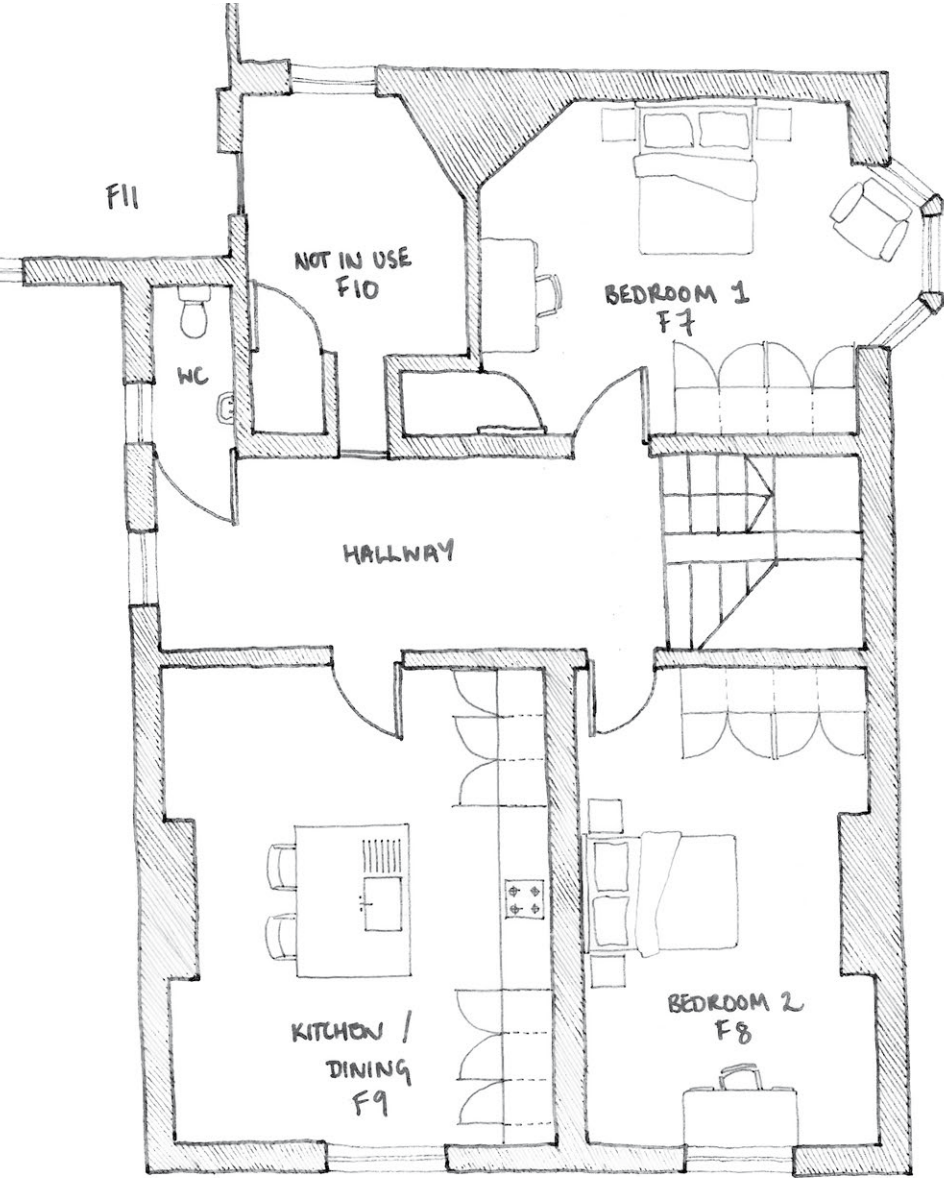


First Floor

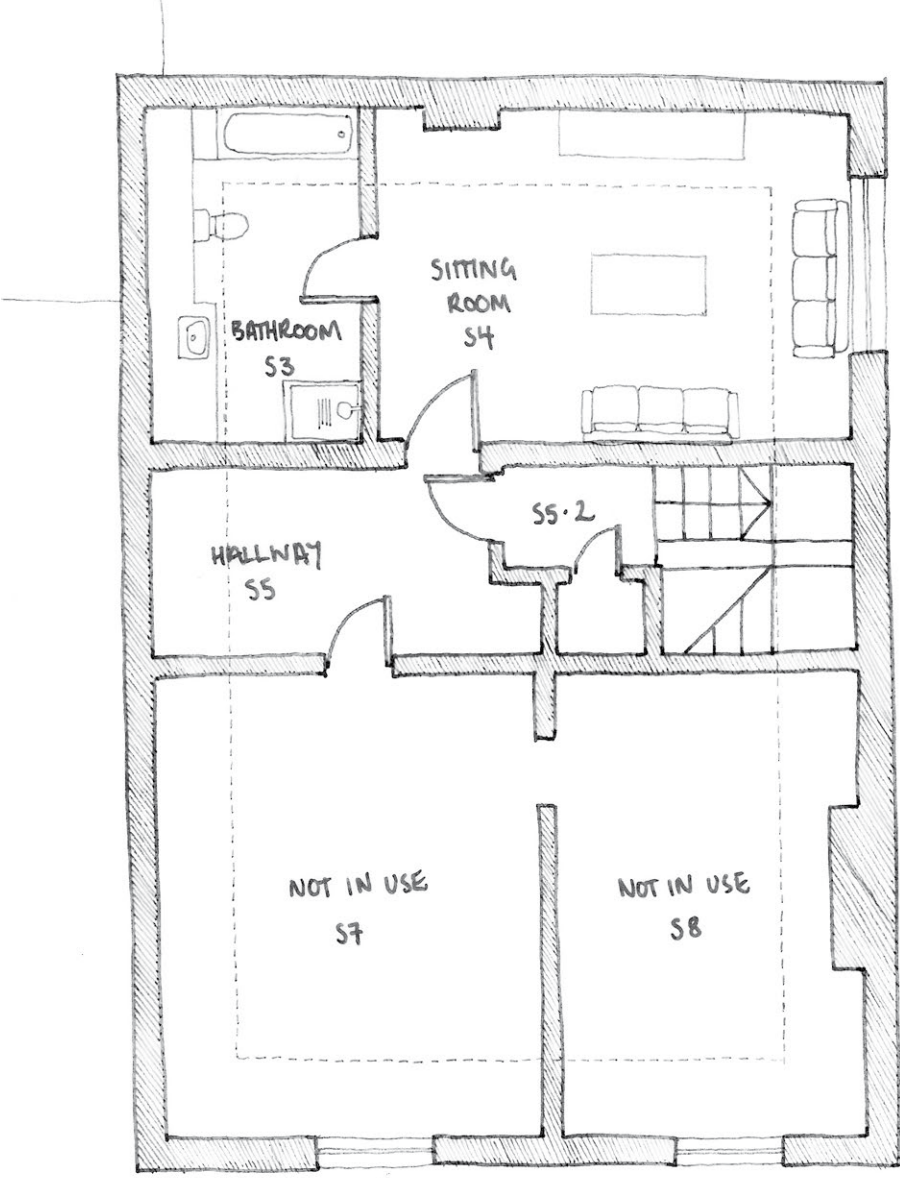


Second Floor

2.3 PROPOSED GENERAL ARRANGEMENT PLAN
OPTION 2

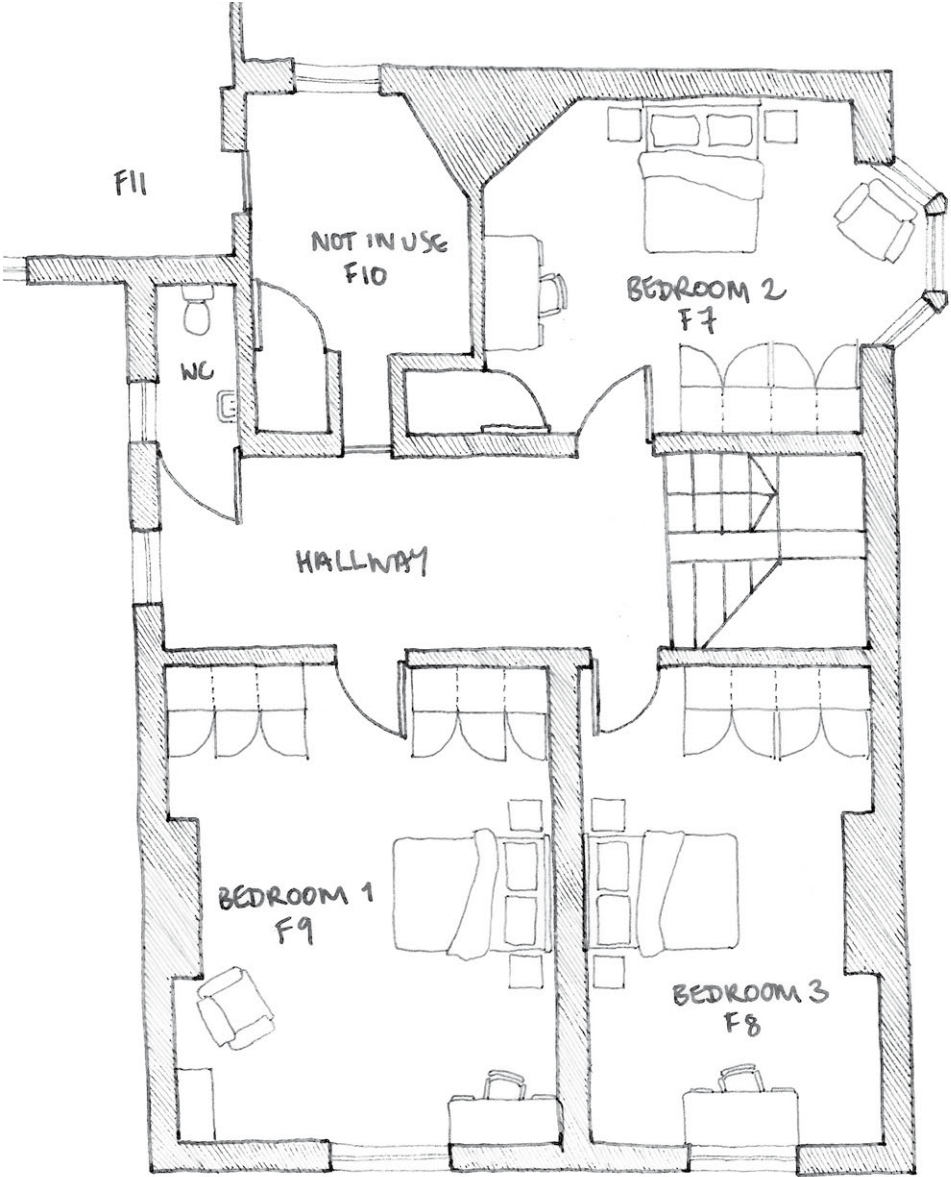


First Floor

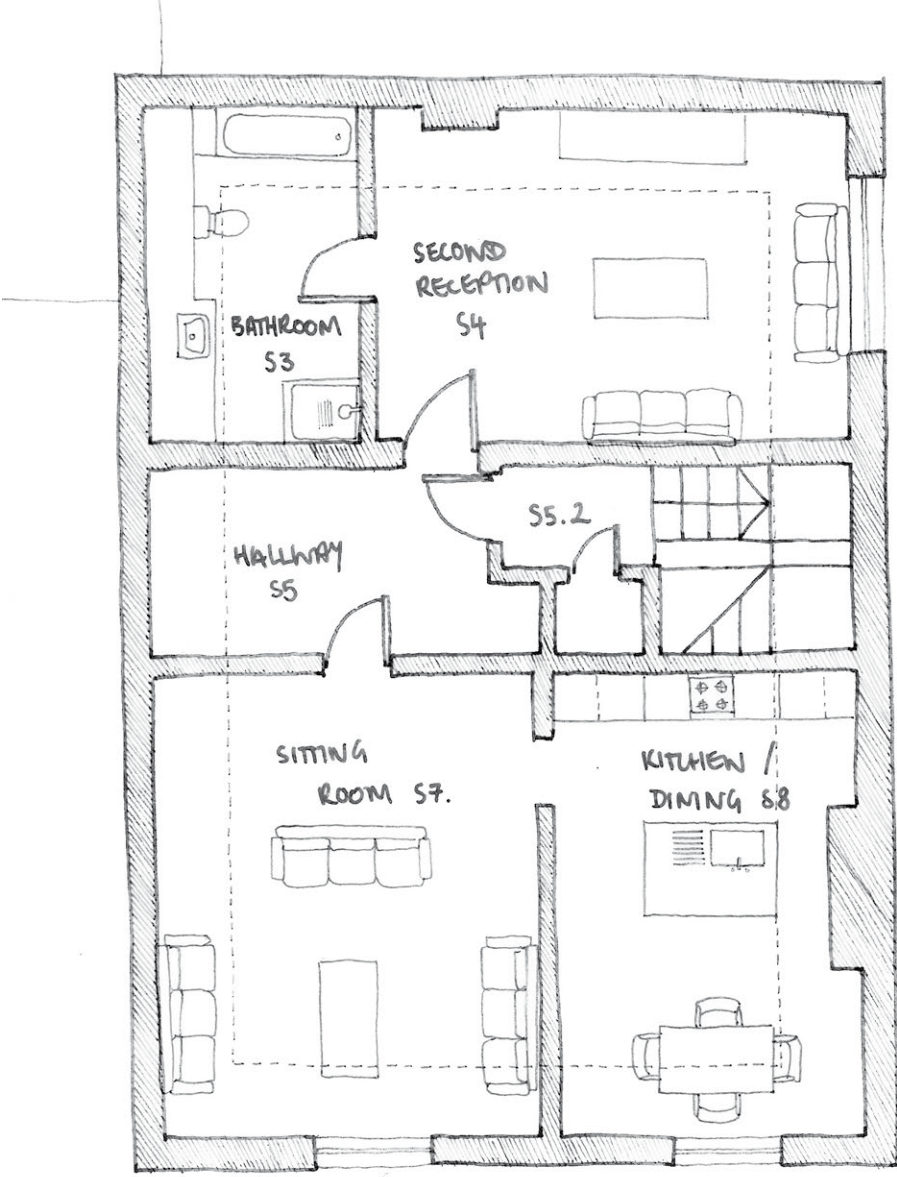


Second Floor

2.4 PROPOSED GENERAL ARRANGEMENT PLAN
OPTION 3



First Floor

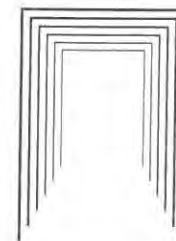


Second Floor

Worcester City Council

A development and business plan for the Commandery

Appendix 7: Letter of advice on environmental conditions



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24 March 2015

David Clarke,
DCA Consultants
Studio 6
Clark's Courtyard, 145 Granville Street
Birmingham
B1 1SB
United Kingdom

Dear David,

The Commandery

Further to our meeting at the Commandery on 25th February, and subsequent conversation on the 2nd March, I attach a copy of our initial thoughts for the damp remedial work and the conversion of the Queen Anne wing into a holiday let.

1.0 Remedial works.

The environmental condition throughout the Commandery is poor, and the levels of humidity, limit the ability of the museum to borrow items to display in the house.

During our walk around with David Nash on the 13 March, a cold spring day, we noted that in Room 20 the relative humidity was 56 and the temperature was 10 degrees. Later in the afternoon a temperature of 9 degrees and an RH of 62% was recorded in the gallery over the Great Hall.

Whilst a temperature increase would benefit visitors, the main concern is the level of humidity. Overall levels, restrict the Commandery to only displaying valuable items in cases with cassettes which keep the humidity at 50%.

Addressing areas of damp will help reduce the overall relative humidity and in combination with improved humidity control will allow greater options for interpretation and display of collections.

Damp in rooms 15, 19 and the Great Hall have been identified by Commandery staff as a concern, and have therefore been addressed as part of this initial investigation. Further areas of damp were noted during the walk around on the 13 March including in the cupboard between 19 and 20, and room 4.

1.1 Room 19.

The damp in Room 19 is most likely to be caused by a combination of rising damp, precipitation caused by driving rain. The construction of the gable end and the lack of ventilation to existing flues will also promote damp within the construction.

We recommend the following phases of work:

- Appoint a specialist to carry out core samples within the brickwork to confirm the cause of damp.
- Carry out a survey of the existing drains to establish whether the existing rainwater pipes can be rationalised and upgraded to accommodate the current levels of rainwater precipitation.

- Carry out a detailed condition survey of the west elevation to establish the condition and any repairs required.
- Carry out removal of small windows of paint and plaster internally to check on the age and plaster type.
- Investigate fireplace in 22 to check where the flue runs, and identify a location for ventilation.

1.2 Rooms 15

The damp in these areas is most likely to be caused by rising damp, or rain driven precipitation.

We recommend the following phases of work:

- Appoint a specialist to carry out core samples within the brickwork to confirm the cause of damp.
- Carry out removal of small windows of paint and plaster internally to check on the age and plaster type.

1.3 The Great Hall

There is damp to the brick plinths and timber sole plate to the timber frame on the west and east elevations of the Great Hall.

We recommend the following phases of work:

- Appoint a specialist to carry out core samples within the brickwork to confirm the cause of damp.
- Carry out removal of small windows of paint and plaster internally to check on the age and plaster type.

2.0 Conversion of the Queen Anne Wing into Holiday Lets.

2.1 Understanding the heritage.

The Queen Anne Wing was built c1700, and has always been used as a self-contained house by families such as the Camerons, the Forsters and finally the Littleburys, it eventually served as offices. The fireplace upstairs bears the arms of the Wylde and Berkeley families, thought to have been originally commissioned as a bedstead to celebrate the marriage of Dorothy Berkeley and Thomas Wylde in the C16.

2.2 Proposed Uses.

It is proposed to use the suite of rooms on the first floor as a kitchen/dining room with two bedrooms and shower room. See sketches attached.

The current configuration of the rooms make conversion of the first floor very difficult. Whilst spatially room 10 could be converted into a bathroom, careful consideration on how to treat the panelling would be required in order to avoid the risk of causing long term damage. A better location for a bathroom would be on the second floor in room S3, however, this would involve incorporating S4 into the proposal in order to provide access. An alternative option would be to provide an upside down living arrangement with living and dining accommodation on the second floor with bedroom accommodation on the first floor.

Further research may indicate historic changes which will provide the basis for improving the arrangement through carrying out alterations to partitions or forming new entrances in existing partitions

We recommend the following phases of work:

- Provide an update to the conservation statement to specifically cover the Queen Anne Wing.
- Update sketch proposals.

3.0 Next Phase

We recommend that as a next phase of works the following investigation be undertaken:

- Carry out investigations on damp to provide a solution for the remedial works.
- Carry out a feasibility study for the installation of a new water based heating system and a comparison for an electrical system to the Civil War route only.
- Update the conservation statement to understand the development of the Queen Anne Wing and assess the potential for change.

As requested we provide the budget costs for your reference below:

3.1 Damp remedial works

We anticipate that remedial works on the damp for the three areas identified above could cost in the region of £50,000 - £100,000 ex VAT.

Professional fees for development work include:

I.0	Damp remedial works	Time	Rate	Cost
	Tender and commission specialist core sample investigations on damp	4	85	340
	Tender and commission plaster investigations, drainage survey and other investigative work.	7	85	595
	Attendance during investigations	2	85	170
	Arrange access and survey west elevation	7	85	595
	Review reports and report to client	4	85	340
	Prepare schedule of works and drawings to enable the remedial works to be priced	7	85	595
		14	45	630
	Subtotal			3265
	Allowance for Core sample investigations			5000
	Allowance for drainage survey			2500
	Allowance for builders work			1000
	Grand total			11765
	Following these investigations work will be required in submitted proposals for planning, listed building consent, building control and tendering the final scheme.			

3.2 New M&E System.

We anticipate that a new electrical radiator system connected to humidity sensors could cost in the region of £30,000-£50,000. Costs for a new water based heating system including builders work will cost in the region of £1000 per metre squared.

Professional fees for development work include:

I.O	New heating system	Time	Rate	Cost
	Commission a mechanical and electrical consultant to carry out a condition survey of the current heating system, a prepare a feasibility study assessment of the options for a new system.	2	85	170
	Attendance during investigations	2	85	170
	Review report and report to client	2	85	170
	Work with mechanical and electrical consultant to develop scheme for the electrical radiator system	7	85	595
	Prepare schedule of works and drawings for builders work in connection with installation	7	85	595
		14	45	630
	Review proposals with English Heritage and the conservation officer	3	85	255
	Subtotal			2585
	Allowance for feasibility study work from M&E consultants and development of electrical installation to RIBA Stage 2			7500
	Grand total			10085
	Following these investigations work will be required in submitting proposals for listed building consent, building control and tendering the final scheme.			

3.3 Development of proposals for Queen Anne Wing

We anticipate that costs to convert the Queen Anne Wing would be in the region of £300,000-£600,000 ex VAT but including professional fees.

Professional fees for development work include:

I.O	New heating system	Time	Rate	Cost
	Prepare update to conservation statement focussing on the development of the Queen Anne Wing			2500
	Update sketch proposals	4	85	340
		7	45	315
	Review proposals with English Heritage and conservation officer	3	85	255
	Grand total			3410

We have provided the figures above for your own internal purposes, based on approximate rates. These should be verified by a qualified quantity surveyor as soon as funding is available.

4.0 Desirable work

Given the current budget we suggest that the most sensible solution would be to consider the installation of temporary electrical heaters connected to humidity sensors throughout the Civil War route. This will not address the damp issues but will provide improved comfort levels and assist in controlling humidity levels. The cost of any damp remediation work is best left for a future phase of work with the benefit of public funding, such as the HLF.

The benefit of carrying out the work as part of an HLF application is that it would allow the Commandery to undertake a full Conservation and Management Plan, a condition survey and Maintenance Management Plan. Given the various changes in the roof trusses in rooms 14 and 27 and the alterations to panelling in 11 and 12, we recommend that a full archaeological study be carried out to provide a more detailed understanding of the significance of the Commandery.

I trust that this information is of assistance and look forward to hearing from you in due course.

With best wishes,



James Mackintosh
Senior Architect
On behalf of Purcell®