

Project Xanadoo

Proposal to develop the site for the National Contemporary Art Gallery at Mamhilad.

Project Xanadoo is a project which is in the feasibility and design stage of development. It was initiated 7 years ago by members of the founding team of the Eden Project and seeks to establish a new world class Visitor Destination in South-East Wales. We have a clear concept for the destination which seeks to deliver public education and engagement to encourage participation in bringing about a better-balanced world. Our headline is "Create the world you want to see" and like our approach at Eden we will utilise entertainment and multi-sensory stimulation to attract a wide audience to the destination.

We require a site that can accommodate 30,000m2 of exhibition and hospitality activity and identified the grade 2* listed British Nylon Spinnners building at Mamhilad, in Torfaen as our preferred site 5 years ago. The building has remained largely empty for over 15 years and comprises over 100,000 m2 of ex-factory space of one and two storeys with each storey being approx. 6 m in height. It is the largest listed building in Wales and is more than twice the size of Battersea Power station, with red brick architecture designed by Sir Percy Thomas reminiscent of Tate Modern in design. It has excellent infrastructure links being sited just off the main Pontypool to Abergavenny A road and the station at Pontypool, only approx. 1 mile away is currently undergoing a major upgrade.

Co-locating the National Contemporary Art Gallery on this site would bring a compelling new cluster of activity together which would be highly complementary. There is plenty of space to accommodate both and they would bring a dynamic new synergy to an area which is excellently positioned but which currently suffers high levels of social and economic deprivation. Our ground-breaking approach to local sourcing and employment brought significant economic impact to Cornwall (over £2 bn evidenced to date over 23 years) and we would seek to work with the NCAG to replicate this in South Wales.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Redacted under S43 of the Freedom of Information Act

We have enclosed further information and assessed how we meet the stated criteria below.

We look forward to hearing from you with regards to this approach.

	Essential	Desirable
Museum and exhibition criteria:		
7,500-15,000m2, with at least 2/3 rd gallery space and with at least one single gallery 1000m2 plus potential to extend further in the future.	7,500 m2 available	12,000 m2 plus available for further extension if required 20,000 m2 available over the longer term
Ceiling height	6m 20,000 m2	10m

		1,000 m2 available at this height
Tenure	Long leasehold of 125 years currently in negotiation	
Capable of accommodating significant annual footfall	Can accommodate 750k per annum (2k per day)	Can accommodate 1m per annum (3k per day)
Potential to coordinate/facilitate touring exhibitions.	Yes	Yes
External display area for specific installations	Yes	
Access, Infrastructure and location:		
Transport Infrastructure (road and rail) – enables sufficient access for large numbers of people. Transport links to the site may be a trade-off balancing between • urban sites with different transport options; or • more rural/isolated locations with transport links.	Road and rail transport links to the site and good.	
Tourism Infrastructure (i.e. sufficient hotels, places to stay overnight, restaurant offer).	The tourism infrastructure is adequate and there is significant opportunity to develop it further both on the site and within the surrounding community.	
Ample Parking for Visitor Numbers. (c500 spaces)		Parking is part of the green travel plan being developed. 500 spaces identified tbc
Availability of digital connections.	Yes	
Location should include regeneration potential.	Massive regeneration potential both of place and economic and social impact	
Proximity to major urban centres/ other visitor attractions Could consider rural location if suitable transport links. Ideally rail and road.	Near Pontypool with excellent infrastructure links	
Building features:		
Landmark building, perhaps existing heritage, significant piece of architecture in its own right, balancing it as a 'magnet' and potential cost envelope - could be new or repurposed building.	Landmark grade 2* iconic building with relatively easy repurposing	
Extensive storage space for collections, including suitable security and	Yes	

environmental conditions.		
Lift access within the building infrastructure (or space to incorporate it) for goods and visitors.	Already within fabric of building but will need upgrading. Public access and fire access appraisal underway	
Adequate and separate areas for exhibition build and change over.	Yes	
Policy considerations:		
Supports and promotes wider national and local culture offer in Wales and does not detract	Yes	
Potential to explore art in the outdoors such as sculpture especially if a venue came with land and had the potential to use sculpture part as a different way to bring art and nature together.	Yes, and our team have an evidenced track record of delivering this at The Eden Project	
Need to ensure digital access options as keyway to x democratise and promote access to the national collection.	Yes part of core philosophy	

