

MARDEN PARISH COUNCIL

DESIGN AND FUNDING EVOLUTION

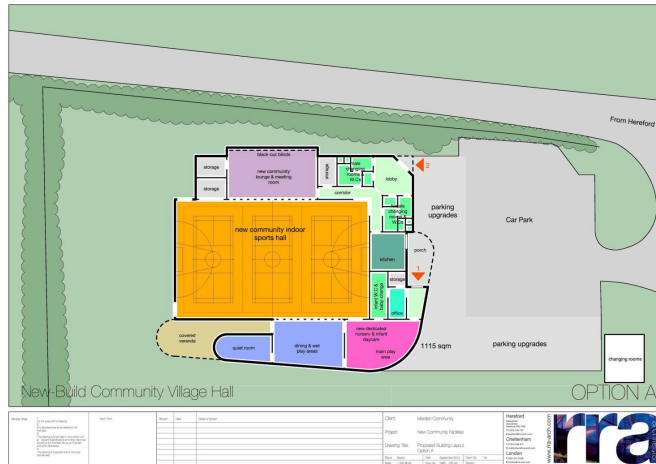
2011 -2012 – Feasibility Study – Carried out by RRA for Marden Village Trust and funded by S&A (£2,500)

All user groups & the Parish Council were surveyed with the following summary results:

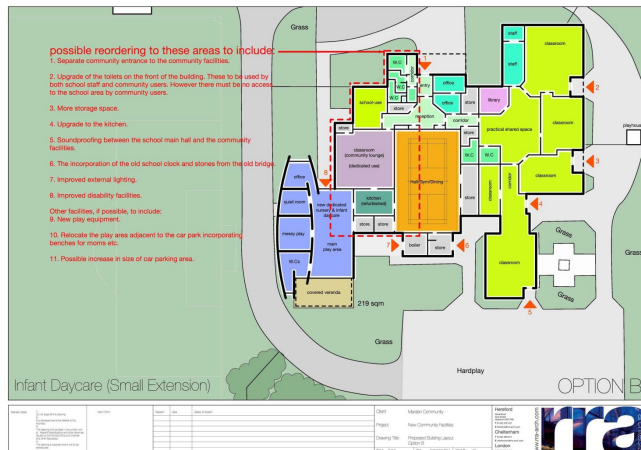
Top 5 priorities	Least popular ideas
A sustainable eco-friendly building	Something that sorts out what we need now
A separate building /structure	A modern addition that is distinct from main building
Something that Marden Community could be proud of	Something that matches the existing building
Something that will endure as a community legacy	An attached extension
Something affordable but not too fussy	

Six options developed from extending current, new build on either school land or the recreation ground. Three options presented:

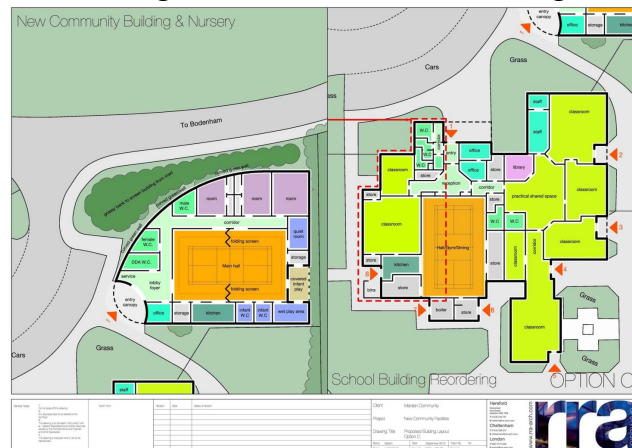
- a. New build next to Recreation Ground Trust car park. 1115m² but includes a sports hall and dedicated areas for Pre-School.



- b. A side extension. 219m² to house the Pre-School only plus reordering of current community facilities.



- c. New build on land at the front left of the school building. 663m² to include a community hall and the Pre-School remaining in a reordered school building.



Issues of cost, funding, loss of open green space and asset ownership contributed to project not progressing further at that time. The most important issue was that the land needed was owned by Herefordshire Council and leased by MVT (or would mean much of the recreation ground was used).

2012 – 2014 – The leases and associated documents between Herefordshire Council and Marden Village Trust were signed on 20th February 2012. Marden Primary School became an Academy as of 1st January 2014 and became head lessee for the building and grounds. The Community and Shared Leases were reassigned from Herefordshire Council to the Academy. ***This was a significant change in structure and has had a major impact on the project due to the implications associated with the relinquishment of leases and associated clawback.***

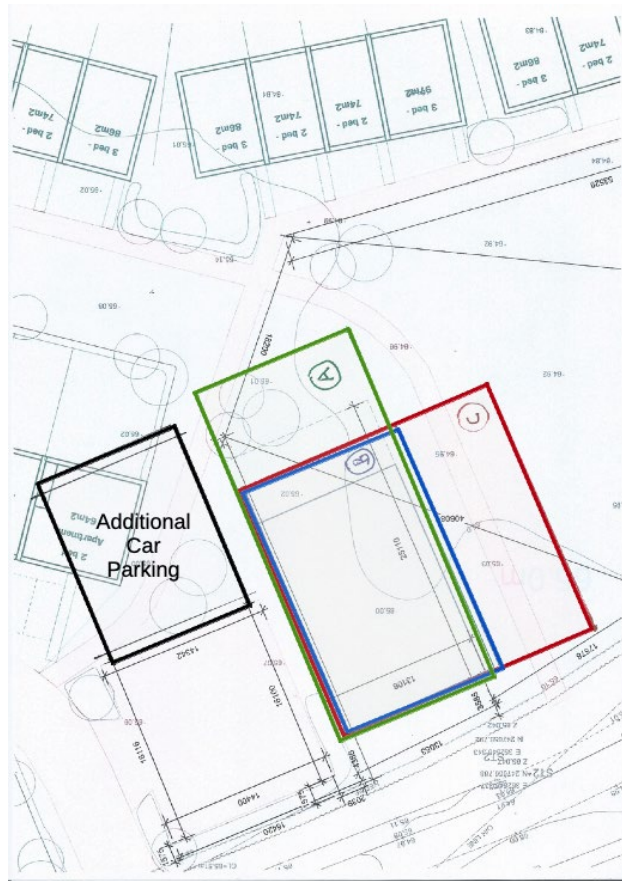
The Marden Village Trust signed the revised leases and looked to develop an updated constitution. The updated constitution was adopted on the 16th January 2017.

2015 – The New House Farm (NHF) development proposal being developed for up to 90 houses offered the gift of land to the Parish (Parish Council) adjacent to the school building and recreation ground, on the understanding that a community building and village green would be developed. This development site was supported by the emerging Neighbourhood Development Plan which was “made” (adopted) in late 2016.

To progress a potential project, the Parish Council formed a cross-community working group – New Community Facilities Working Group (CFG). The group was tasked with developing community facilities and a village green that would meet current and future needs of the parish. The group used the outcomes of the 2011-12 feasibility study as a starting point with further verification of the requirements through a further questionnaire to the then current 10 regular user groups. These groups concentrated on current needs and highlighted daytime constraints, storage, and pre-school equipment / posters as the top issues to be addressed.

The initial assumption was that the CFG should look at a building that met all current and future needs in one building. The Marden Village Trust would (with parishioner approval) relinquish the leases and invoke the clawback clause, thus providing a potential £237k towards the new build (calculated at the time based on the current retail price index).

The initial proposed gifted site made by NHF did not allow for an appropriately sized building and associated car parking area without eating into the area for a village green. The Parish Council was asked to demonstrate the need for a larger parcel of land. The CFG worked up three potential configurations, shown below. Based on this submission NHF increased the size of the gifted land. The three options being based on a single storey building with floor areas of 478m² (£890k), 431m² (£809k), both with a sports hall and lastly one of 323m² (£618k) with only two large meeting rooms. All three options also included kitchen, bar and store, lobby, storage, and toilets. A study of a number of newly built community builds across England clearly indicated that a single storey building was the correct approach. The agreed option based on a floor area of 431m² formed the basis for the S106 heads of terms.



A = Rectangle with Hall, B = No Hall, C = Square with Hall



Having reviewed the above in more detail the initial proposal of the CFG was to look at a total project cost of around £1.25m based on a footprint of up to 500m² and built to Passivhaus standard. At this time we were looking at a funding model that would include £850k from a lottery grant (based on Garway PC's new hall project), £150k from the clawback (conservative view) when leases terminated and £250k from local fundraising, other grants and/or a Public Works loan.

2016 – Given the likely size and complexity of such a project it became apparent that the CFG needed help and support in moving forward with a professionally formulated design if funding was to be obtained. In early 2016 the Parish Council tendered for an architect, 5 firms were interviewed and Architype selected. Architype, at the time, were also the architects for the NHF development and a leader in Passivhaus design. All architects interviewed were asked to submit their view of the cost of a build to the floorplan of 431m², their cost ranged from £970k to £1.5m, with Architype's estimate being around £1m.

Preliminary discussions with the Lottery Reaching Communities helpline made it clear that £850k would be out of the question. A more realistic figure would be £500k. This necessitated a rethink in design to reduce total costs. It was determined that the target reduction in costs could be met by reducing the overall size by removing the need for a sports hall (the current hall could be hired from the Academy) and remove the Passivhaus requirement. A stage 1 Lottery application was submitted for £500k in early 2016. In May 2016 the Parish Council heard that the application had been unsuccessful and while we could apply again, we were unlikely to succeed. In fact, that Lottery fund closed at the end of 2016.

As a further blow to the funding model initially established, discussions with Herefordshire Council made it clear that the MVT terminating the leases and invoking the clawback clause would have potential significant consequences for the Academy and thus parish sustainability. Additionally, advice from the Charity Commission made it clear that the MVT would not be able to give the clawback to the Parish Council to help fund the project, the issue being that a charity cannot give to a public body. The issue of taking the clawback and the associated risk became a theme continually raised by a few parishioners, even though both Academy and Herefordshire Council legal teams confirmed on a number of occasions that the Academy would ultimately be asked to pay the clawback amount, something clearly the Academy could not do.

The project was now left with a funding model that consisted of a Public Works Loan (max £500k), local fundraising and donations plus other grants which meant the maximum budget, without taking out an extra commercial loan / mortgage at high and uncertain cost, would be in the region of £650k - £700k. This significantly limited the single building project approach originally looked at.

The CFG looked at three potential options:

- a. Do nothing – deemed unrealistic given the long-standing issues and the once in a lifetime gifting of land.
- b. Move Pre-School and extend/refurbish existing facilities – It was not clear where the Pre-School would go, existing safeguarding issues needed to be addressed, sinking more parishioner money into an asset that they do not own or have control over and more importantly the Academy were not keen on this option.
- c. Provide a build that could be managed in phases as funding allowed. The aim being to provide a smaller building that would provide for current needs and cater for the increase

in population from the known housing increase established in the Neighbourhood Development plan.

The phased building approach was agreed based on the siting of the building allowing natural future expansion. Archtype set about looking again at the requirements (surveyed the then current user groups again with a targeted questionnaire and a focus session). From the analysis of the results, they developed five potential options that would allow for expansion later should funds become available. The floor area of these options ranged in size from 213m² to 383m², none of which would have a sports hall as the current facility would be available for hire under any known scenario.

An open event to show these potential design options to parishioners was held at the end of June 2016. This open day was then followed up with a parish wide questionnaire delivered to every household in July 2016. 196 returns were received, a 34% response rate with 81% agreed with the idea of a new community building.

The three options believed to be most appropriate to the site where:



In September 2016, a meeting was held between the Academy Head, the MVT Chair, the Community Facilities Group Chair and the Pre-School manager to run through the potential design proposals / options and discuss the safeguarding and potential lease clawback position. With regard to the clawback the Academy stated opinion was "Hereford would most certainly follow through on this action to obtain reimbursement from the Academy as on the one hand, Hereford

are in severe financial difficulties and on the other, destabilising the Academy financially, leading to its closure, fits with Hereford's long-term strategy or rationalisation of educational provision." They went on to state that the Academy has nothing like the sum in question in reserves (current reserves are sufficient to meet statutory employment requirements) and that there would be no possibility of bidding for such a sum from the Department of Education.

Based on the feedback received from the parishioner questionnaire combined with other specific analysis of funding restrictions and clawback issues, the project team had to rethink the scenarios available and proposed several specific options to an open parish council meeting in October 2016. Again, five options were presented:

- a. Do nothing – Solves nothing and existing situation only gets worse over time
- b. Reclaim the community centre – Safeguarding and ownership issues remain
- c. New build known as option 3, 212m² (cost £431k) with ability to be expanded in the future. Relinquishing the leases deemed to be a significant issue.
- d. New build known as option 3b, 262m² (cost £509k) with the ability to be expanded in the future. Relinquishing the leases deemed to be a significant issue.
- e. Hybrid model, a combination of option 3b while keeping the current facilities and operating the overall facilities as one.

The Hybrid model was selected as the preferred option with a funding plan that would need a Public Works Loan of £350k that would be supplemented by other grants of £100k and community fundraising of £50k. This funding requirement did not consider the cost of providing a village green.

Following this meeting, it was agreed to consult with parishioners on an increased precept in the financial year 2017/18 to include the equivalent of the annual repayment of a Public Works Loan of £300k. The parish supported this increase.

With the delays in the project that followed due to Brexit, the general economy, the delay in sale of the New House Farm land to a developer, the phosphate issues and Covid pandemic, the planning application and S106 heads of term have yet to be agreed / finalised. It is anticipated that approvals will be given in 2022. In the meantime, the precept taken to fund the loan has been ring-fenced in Parish Council reserves and only used to move the project forward.

Other Design Options Reviewed during the period 2016 to 2019

Throughout the project there have several other ideas put forward by either CFG members or parishioners. The aim of each being to keep the overall cost down or to keep the current facility viable and thus avoid the need for a new facility; these were as follows:

1. Reduce costs by having a community built project. There are many trade skills in the parish – while a clear possibility the idea would be almost impossible to administer and run even if appropriate trades came forward. Very difficult to convince funders that such a project is achievable. However, the final project version now will look to incorporate specific elements that will allow local parishioners with skills to participate.
2. Base the build on a prefabricated steel frame – in fact the current design is based on a steel frame but it would only reduce costs if the original basis was a wood or all brick structure.
3. Turnkey approach – three examples were looked at: Little Milton Hall, Goss Croft Community Hall, and Cholsey Pavilion. This build option was disregarded because it provided little flexibility in design and would not be significantly cheaper in the long run.

4. Erect a steel framed steel-clad indoor sports hall on gifted land with a possible footprint of 300m². Basic installed cost being £75k without the cost of a base, flooring, insulation, heating and any other self-finish required – this option was deemed to be totally inappropriate for the proposed setting and again would not solve any of the basic issues identified. A sports hall was already in use and would continue to be available.

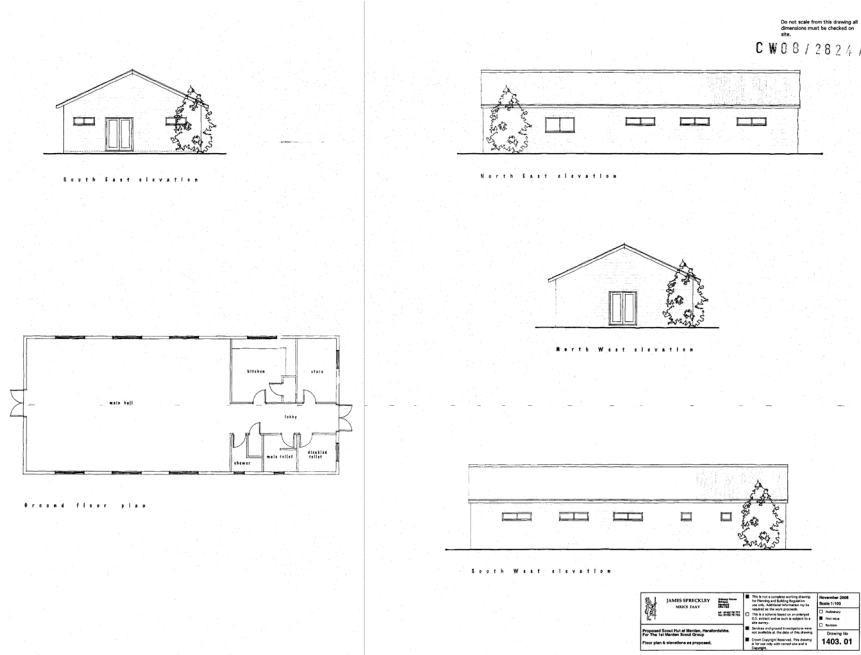


5. Looking at other potential premises within the parish. Two options were looked at briefly at this time as both properties were believed to be for sale.

- a. The Volunteer Inn
- b. Old School House

Both rejected as they would be costly to purchase and repurpose as a community facility and would require the current Community Centre to remain. Buildings would not be co-located.

- c. The Scout hut – eventually taken by the District Scouts and the hut was removed, although some years ago planning permission was granted for a brick building that would replace the hut and the foundations were started.



The Big Lottery Fund made a number of valid comments in their application refusal letter and the CFG set about trying to address some of the suggestions made. Two areas were focused on, wider

consultation and the creation of a project fundraising group. Consultation days were held in February 2017 concentrating on two main areas, the youth and the elderly & isolated.

The youth review led to the establishment of a monthly youth club night. This group ran successfully and expanded, until Covid shut down the Community Centre. While the youth group was able to use the community room, the hall and the recreation ground during the evenings with daylight, it became very restricted when limited to the community room and hall. To run more frequently became impossible given the few available time slots.

The review of the elderly / isolated demonstrated the need for daytime facilities that could only be successfully provided in a new building. The Parish Council is currently (start of 2022) supporting the start-up of a Parish Hub under Herefordshire Councils Talk Community initiative. This initiative will expand further once the new building is opened.

2017 – A Fundraising Group was formed in January 2017 and has provided many successful events right up until Covid lockdowns.

By April 2017 it was clear that the sale of NHF land to a developer was likely to take some time given the current economic uncertainty. While the community had agreed the design basis and an increase in precept, funding options were becoming narrower.

As the project could not progress further it was put on hold, other than taking the opportunity to review several options again.

The following design options were reviewed:

- a. Reduce the size of the building – Architype had evaluated one of 185m² (£476k) and one of 212m² (504k), both regarded as too small to meet current needs.
- b. Reduce the specification of the building e.g. a steel frame may be a lower cost.

The following funding options were reviewed:

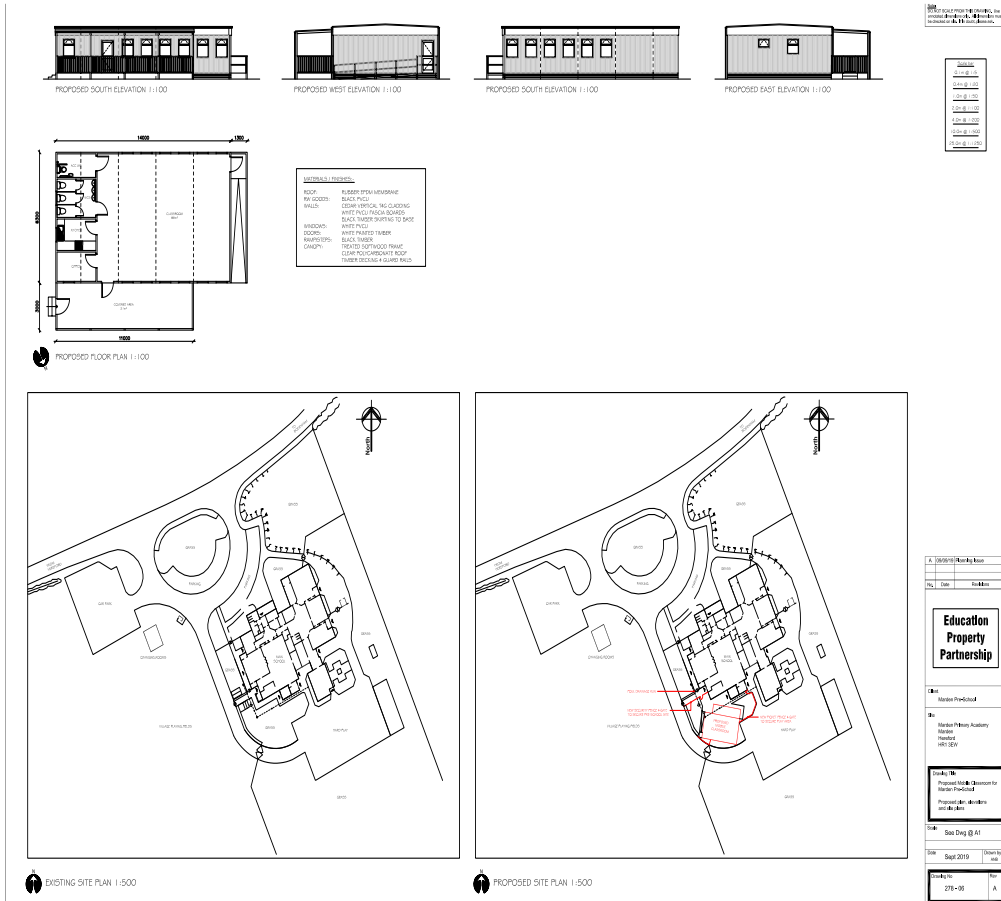
- c. Revisit relinquishing the leases on the Community Centre and using the clawback (at this time £237k) to help fund the new build – subsequently further legal advice meant this was not a realistic option.
- d. Increase the Public Works Loan requirement to £450k – maximum loan in any one year being £500k.

During the remainder of 2017 and through 2018, the CFG undertook a more detailed analysis of the potential parish community assets and how they might be improved and used in conjunction with the current Community Centre.

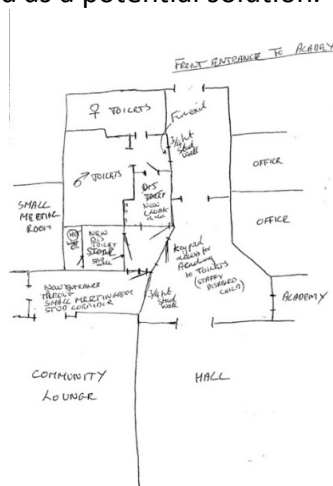
The following areas were look at:

1. The church and bell tower – the bell tower has a museum on the ground floor and a meeting room on the second floor. The church has an ever growing and popular library, and the church has been used for several parish meetings. More recently has been used to provide tea and cake afternoons. Unfortunately, the facilities suffer from being distant from the centre of the village.
2. Marden Chapel – has facilities to allow it to be used as a small meeting room.
3. Current Community Centre – at this time it was felt that it needed a substantial revamp, new floor, decoration throughout and a new kitchen.

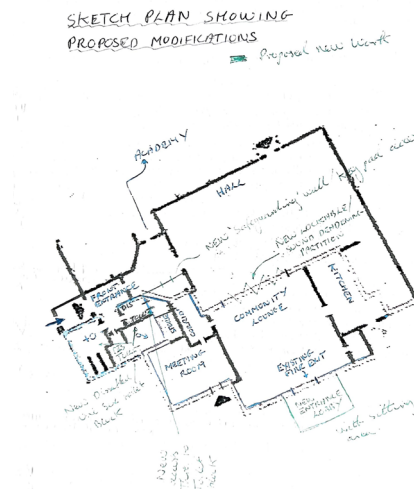
4. BT phone kiosk – cleaned and painted is now used as an information hub with a seed swap managed by the Gardeners’ Association.
5. Providing the Pre-School a temporary building on Academy land was investigated with one clear option identified. While it was seen to be inappropriate for the Parish Council to fund this action, the Pre-School trustees have further enhanced the scheme and with Academy approval submitted a planning application. This application has also been held up by the phosphate issue. Shown below is a proposed design submitted for planning approval.



6. Several possible design options were looked at relating to the existing community building and Academy.
 - a. Given the growing safeguarding issue that was not going to disappear, the following changes were proposed as a potential solution.



- b. A further proposed design was put forward to extend out onto the grass area alongside the community room and provide a dedicated community entrance as well as independent toilets and storage.



Both options would require Academy and MVT support and approval. While these options have been discussed, other than some minor changes, the ideas have been abandoned, as they do not overcome the issue that the land is owned by Herefordshire Council and only leased by the MVT.

7. In late 2017 the MVT trustees carried out a parish wide survey to establish what improvements were seen as important in improving the current building. The submission was largely based on the CFG's earlier analysis which the parish wide survey confirmed. In 2018, £32k of grant funding was secured by the MVT to carry out the work which was completed in 2020.

On the 29th December 2018 the NHF land was sold to a developer and signalled the restart of the project.

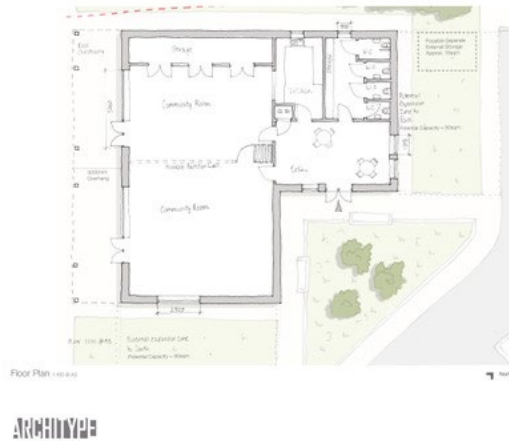
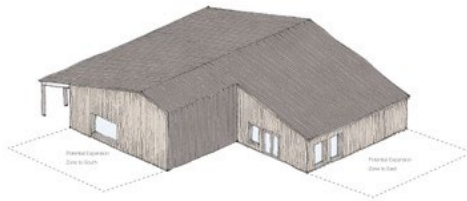
2019 - 2020 – with Architype back on the project it was decided that the hybrid model, already approved, would be further progressed at least to RIBA stage 3 (outline design and planning application). With Brexit starting to cause issues within the construction industry, both to materials supply chain and higher wages, establishing a clear project cost to complete became essential. Several detailed estimates were produced by the quantity surveyor and a budget clearly established.

In December 2019 a further community consultation event was held to show the proposed latest design. A flyer for the event was delivered to every household in the parish. Although only 45 parishioners attended the event, the overall view was positive. A plan of the Fundraising Group's 2020 planned events was shown, unfortunately they were put on hold until 2022 due to Covid.

To ensure that all stakeholders in the project agreed with the design basis, detailed presentations of the proposed business plan were made by the CFG to the MVT, the Academy Governors and the Parish Council. A copy was also shared with the Pre-School trustees given their recent planning application for a temporary classroom. All subsequently endorsed the proposals with the MVT working with the Parish Council to jointly promote the benefits of the project proposal.

Marden Community Centre
Axonometric View

Marden Community Centre
Elevations - Section



Following the December 2019 consultation and further discussions as part of the reviews with the MVT, Academy and Parish Council, it was initially felt that several concerns raised could be met by making the footprint a little larger. At this time, it was felt that the revision would not add significantly to the overall cost.

In parallel, the new architects for the NHF development (Zebra) worked on a revised design for the Reserved Matters application which the Parish Council hoped to piggy-back on and thereby reduce costs. Significant site design changes were made by Zebra to meet the revised site requirements for traffic management and to resolve the phosphate issues. The Parish Council worked with Zebra to ensure that, as the development started, an appropriate access road and entrance would be provided to the community gifted site.

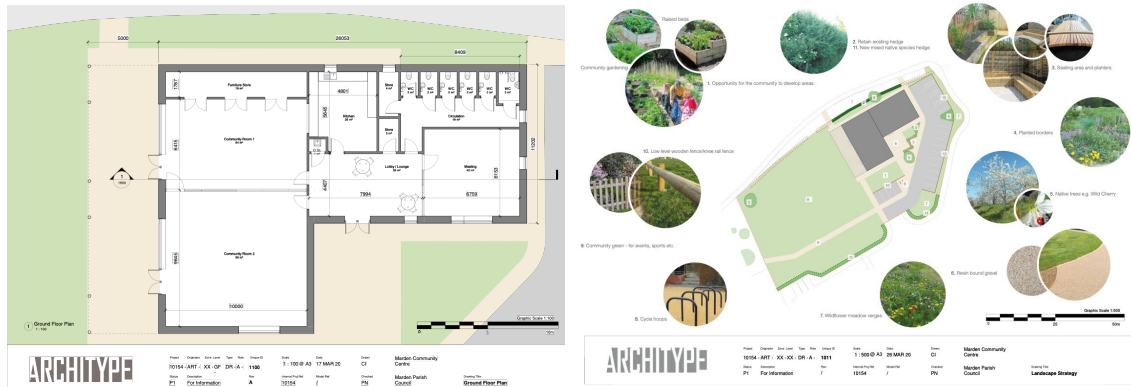
Further discussions between Zebra and the Parish Council on possible synergies will take place once the application has been approved by Herefordshire Council.

Based on site plan agreements with the developer and the enlarged community building, a planning application for a new community facility and village green was submitted in March 2020, the deadline for the overall Reserved Matters application. At the time of writing, S106 finalisation and planning approval is awaited, the delay almost exclusively associated with the phosphate issue and approval is anticipated in 2022.

The current whole site plan is shown below:



Our original submission is shown below:



In mid-2020 Architype suggested that we look for another architect along with a local builder as they had grown considerably as a company and their ongoing fees would significantly impact our project costs. Their contract concluded at the end of RIBA stage 3. Not only their costs were increasing but the combination of Brexit and Covid were clearly having a significant impact on the construction industry outlook.

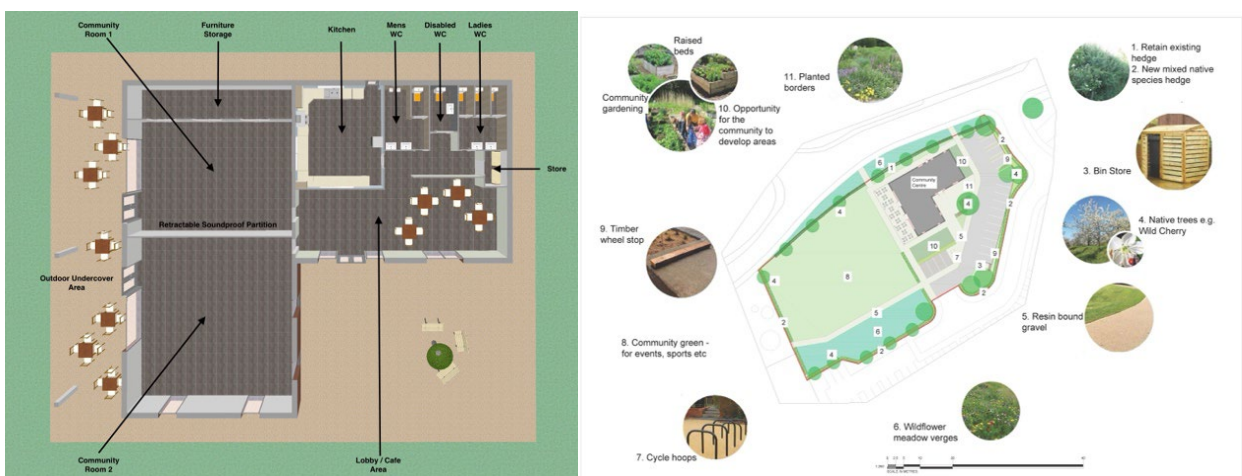
2021 – Brexit, Covid, and more locally the issue with phosphates meant that the planning application was essentially on hold and building costs rising. Again, the project proposal needed to be reviewed with the aim of putting a detailed business case before the parish by the year end (originally planned for late 2019).

During the early part of 2021 we tendered for a new architect, one who had confidence that they could provide a build based on our specification and that would meet the budget. We interviewed three firms and selected CBW Architectural Design Ltd based in Birmingham. A contract was signed in March 2021. The parish council then commissioned three key studies, the cost of which would be deemed as part of their overall agreed fee.

1. A look at the enhanced hybrid design submitted as part of the planning application to see if there was a way to redesign and/or reduce build costs to be within the agreed budget now. Both single floor and two floor designs were evaluated but the single level remained the cheapest option.
2. An analysis of “eco” features that could / should be incorporated and associated additional costs.
3. A detailed costing based on the final building option chosen – a modified “option 3B” which reduced the width of the community rooms by one metre and extended the lobby / toilet / kitchen area, which while retaining the same floor area allowed for a larger kitchen, separate toilet areas and some additional storage.

Based on these three studies, the CFG and Parish Council developed a summary and detailed business plan for the new building and village green which was shown to the parish as part of several consultation events in December 2021, with the intent of holding an opinion poll on the taking out a public works loan of £500k rather than the already approved £300k and the subsequent increase in precept.

2022 – Following feedback from the consultation in December 2021 the Reserved Matters application will be updated to reflect the relatively minor change in design layout. The revised layout is based on the original approved option 3b with a metre removed from the width of the two community rooms and this floor area added to the kitchen, toilets and lobby areas to provide additional space that allows for a larger kitchen, separate male and female toilets, and some additional storage.



Should the outcome of the parish poll in February 2022 support the proposed additional funding requirement, the intent would be to initiate a detailed design and competitive tender document for a fixed price contract for the build.

To make a Public Works Loan (PWL) application, the following information has to be put into a specific PWL Business Plan. The Clerk must make the PWL application and the process can take up to 3 months:

- A detailed tender with costs broken down to elements such as substructure, walls, roof, etc etc is required, not just an overall build figure
- Evidence that the parish supports the taking out of a £500k loan and the increase in precept required – the Opinion Poll being undertaken now
- All the other previous consultations also have to be evidenced in the Business Plan
- Planning approval and ownership of the land are also required
- Details about where all the funding for the project is coming from with details about what has already been raised / awarded – this is another chicken and egg situation as grant awarders will require to know that planning approval and transfer of the land has happened
- Detailed PC budgets for the year in which the application is made and 1-2 more years to show how repayments of the loan are secured
- Timescale, project management details, PC financial management details etc

The Contract with a builder will only be signed if the cost is within the budget and when the planning application has been approved, the land gifted and the Public Works Loan approved. However, as the preparation of the detailed tender document will take about 3 months, delaying this preparation until the planning approval is given and the land gifted only delays the PWL application and other grant applications further.