



# **The Red Brick Community Project**

Glastonbury and Street Somerset

*Building a future by preserving the past!*

# Proposal

- A proposal to The Department of Business, Innovation and Skills for feasibility study funding for Phase Two of this important local project
- The Proposal for Building C is an entirely new concept in Training and Skills Development
- The request is that the funding be awarded jointly to Red Brick Building Centre Ltd and Bridgwater College.



# Background



The buildings are on what used to be the Morlands Sheepskin Factory Site, which until recently has been more or less derelict for over thirty years

In April 2011 the Red Brick Building Centre Ltd acquired the buildings from the South West Regional Development Agency as a community owned project for the development of education and training, the arts, and enterprise.



# Phase One

- Phase One involved the refurbishment and letting of Buildings A and B.
- £750,000 for phase one has already been funded almost entirely by hundreds of individual shareholders and our friends in the local community.
- This is a stunning achievement and has provided over 13,000 square feet of space for individual and shared space for offices, studios, craft working, teaching, the community café, the local community radio station, Bridgwater College, and performance areas.
- Lettings begin in January 2013.



# Phase Two



- Phase Two involves the development of a further 17,000 square feet in Building C.
- **The proposal for Building C is an entirely new concept in Training and Skills Development**
- The concept is being developed in partnership with Bridgwater College who have already taken space in Building B as part of the development process. In due course we hope to involve all the local Colleges.
- The building itself becomes the training project.
- It becomes a large, live, real, major building programme.
- Trainees will not only be the construction team of a major renovation, but also be part of the purchasing department, accounts and budgetary control, as well as the administration and management of the whole project. In addition to the skills training provided by the Colleges, the project itself is keen to provide additional development in self reliance and entrepreneurship.

- The proposal is to renovate the space on a modular basis, unit by unit.
- This approach has three big advantages.
- Firstly, making a series of units means that all trainees should be able to experience every aspect of the one they work on.
- Secondly, each module can be different, employing different construction techniques from the conventional to the experimental.
- This can mean learning new and innovative skills as well as retaining the old ones on a live project before we lose them.
- Thirdly, as each one is completed it becomes available as a revenue generating unit for creating, making or assembling.
- It will be the policy of the project to let the newly created units to start up entrepreneurs, small workshops, organisations and businesses, who will themselves take on apprentices, or offer training and skills development, or use the mentoring and back up infrastructure available on site.



# Costs



- What is it going to cost and is it worth it?
- Of course if we knew the answer we wouldn't be asking for feasibility study money. In fact the bald cost is probably not too difficult to have a go at.
- The simple answer is around £3.9 million over the five year duration of the initial project.
- The more interesting question is how much of that cost can be offset by funding for teaching, some of which is already being spent to build things this week that are going to be knocked down and built again next week!
- In addition, despite the best efforts of Colleges, huge quantities of materials are being chucked in skips every year without ever having done a useful job.

- Rule of thumb figures for the commercial renovation of old buildings are between £50 and £80 a square foot.
- We have delivered buildings A and B at around £70.
- This means that we already have a track record for being able to deliver a commercial job at a realistic price.
- However Building C is not a commercial renovation and it is in worse condition than A and B.
- This project is looking at an extended time frame of say five years, to be realistic, pretty low productivity since most of the work is a teaching exercise, and very heavy “management” ( i.e. teaching) costs.
- If we base the cost on £200 a square foot the answer is £3.4 million. However, we think it might cost up to half a million to get the building itself and the project up and running. This makes the total £3.9 million.
- The likely net rental income at today’s prices of around £50K ( 50% of £6.00 a square foot of about 15000 square feet) means that the return would not support capital borrowing.
- However, if the majority of the labour cost can be offset by teaching costs that would be incurred anyway, it could make very good sense indeed. The “soft” outcomes in terms of trainee retention, real skills development, productive use of both labour and materials, and entrepreneurial stimulation might be even more important.
- It will cost £80,000 to find out if the model makes sense and then if it can be funded.
- This is based on the equivalent of two people for twelve months and some admin support. We think it will involve a 26 week programme to test the figures and make a case.
- If it stands up we think that it will take a further 26 weeks to identify and secure the funding.
- **We are therefore proposing that the request for feasibility funding be in two stages of £40,000 each, the second being dependent on the results of the first.**



The project visitor centre was invented designed and built by Robin Howell with the help of other volunteers and children.

It is made of 12 tons of Argos Catalogues, half a mile of old guttering for the roof, pallets, sheep fleece, fridge packing and other materials donated or sponsored by Local firms.



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