

#FLASHMUD1 : RHIWBINA LIBRARY & STATION

On Saturday 13th May Design Circle together with its partner Friends of Rhiwbina Library hosted a mini design charrette to investigate the potential opportunities at Rhiwbina Library that could be realised as a result of the forthcoming South Wales Metro.

25 local residents, architects, planners and designers took part in a half day creative session that explored the brief, historical context and future potential brought by the proposed Metro.

The event was directed by Dan Lewis Design Circle chair who introduced an agenda for the morning, comprising of context presentations & briefing followed by site exploration, concept development and feedback sessions.

Participants were divided into four team named after of the four roads at crossroads in Rhiwbina Village namely; Beulah Road, Pen Y Dre, Pant Bach Road and Heol Y Deri.

Context: Garden Village

Simon Unwin (Local resident and Professor at the Welsh School of Architecture)

Garden Village one of the early examples of the Ebenezer Howard's Garden City Movement.

The railway station opened in 1911, and the following year development began of a new garden suburb, based on a masterplan by Sir Raymond Unwin, one of the leading architects of the Garden city movement. The first 34 houses were built in 1913 and more were built from 1919 to 1923, occupying an area between Pen-y-dre and Lon Isa which became known as Rhiwbina Garden Village.



- Given the historical context, the key consideration posed by Simon Unwin for the investigating teams was; how to make the entrance to the garden village more appropriate.

Context: Metro

Martin Buckle (Town Planner)

The Metro project is envisaged as a transport system that will transform the way people travel across the whole City Region. Its aim is to provide faster more integrated services using trains buses, light rail, and active travel such as cycling and walking.

Martin also stressed the importance of public transport to assist in reducing carbon emissions. Car driver numbers will increase in Cardiff with an expected 41,000 extra dwellings in an around the Capital in the next 20 years. To compete with the potential increase in vehicle numbers Metro will need to be fast and frequent and operate on a 'Turn Up and Go' service. With the advent of the Regional City Deal, Metro is going to form a large part of the collaborative work between authorities across the region.



Rhiwbina context and thoughts for the investigation.

- Currently Rhiwbina only operates on a single platform. The metro could involve reopening a 2nd platform and Rhiwbina or a possibility of a passing loop on the station.
- An increase in service will be required. Currently there are no trains on a Sunday.
- There is an opportunity for opening up the line to Taffs Well to allow better transportation link to the Valleys. The line would potentially be a major link to the Heath Hospital.

Brief: Challenge

Sue Essex

(Former Welsh Government Minister &
Member of Friends of Rhiwbina Library)

The brief for the day.

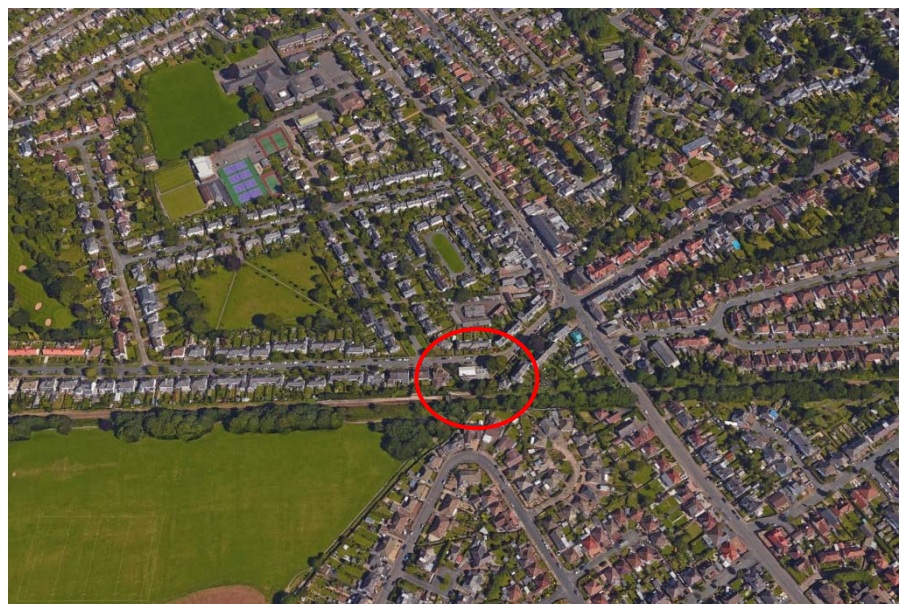
The challenge facing the library and the opportunity that the Metro should bring and thoughts for the design team to take forward.

- Ambition for Rhiwbina was to extend over to Whitchurch.
- Junction was initially envisaged as being a busy link – could it be in the future.
- Historically the library site was intended to be a formal entrance to the station.
- The Council purchased used land in garden village and built the library, which sits out of context with its surroundings.
- Library needs to adapt and change other uses.
- Very well used facility and diversity to create this as a community focus
- Poor storage for multi-use
- Dated facility
- Odd shapes with the siting of the building
- Very piecemeal context in need of ideas.



Site: Exploration

All the groups walked the surrounding areas to understand the context.



Ideas: £10K Interventions

Group discussion looking at £10k interventions that could be delivered in response to the brief.

10k interventions

- Removal of the oil storage areas to create more space internally.
- Opening up the building front to back with improved access through the middle.
- Improved lighting scheme to make the rear of the building less intimidating.
- Existing building limited storage for multiple activities - more storage externally.
- Safe bike storage to rear of site for station and library usage.
- Addressing dog legged area to station , new bridge possibly.
- Back corner office space to be opened up with additional windows to create more passive supervision to the rear of the building.
- Rooftop garden to the single storey building.
- Signage for interchange, linked to other services timetables.
- Signage for links to library.
- Passive overlooking of bike storage.



Ideas: £100K Interventions

Question posed Dan Lewis (DC Chair)

How do we make existing facility link with the station win-win?

100k

- Coffee outlet commercial facility.
- New stairway access off the front.
- Library facility in 2 storeys and internal rearrangement.
- Disabled access fully accessible.
- Downstairs library to be more transparent.
- Improving toilet facility.
- Partial demolition and rebuild.
- Increasing permeability on the ground floor.
- More of an entrance on the street.
- Integration of the building to the station with physical link / shared facility.
- Extension to the rear to create double siding frontage to library.
- Upgraded to create commercial spaces for hire.
- Internal spaces reworked and spill out area to rear.
- Canopy to rear, with external landscaping.
- Visual permeability so the building is seen to be used.
- Glazed frontage to the garden village.
- Increase softer area the front with landscape.
- Flexible spaces and storage.
- Landscaping between the station and the library.

General thoughts on the wider context.

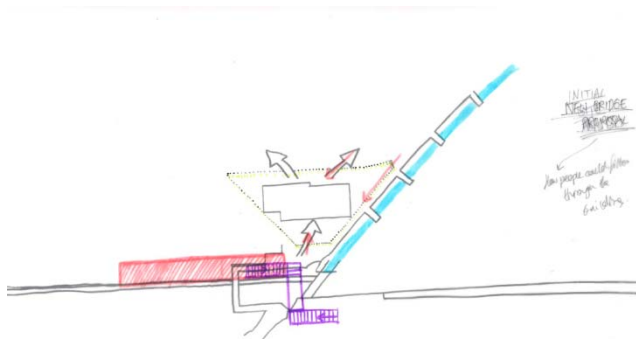
- Opening up to the link to Taffs well.
- Park and ride facility in Taffs well / forest farm to address 'pressure' off the existing road infrastructure.
- Addressing junction potentially looking at village garage to create public space.
- Proposals should strengthen the village long term.



Ideas: Overall Strategy

Team Pant Bach Road:

- Strategy visual connections.
- Cut away at building.
- Open up adjacent to stream.
- Replace the bridge towards the library building.
- Building alterations, reduce plant.
- Procuring a new building with commercial links.
- Bike repair shop next to station.

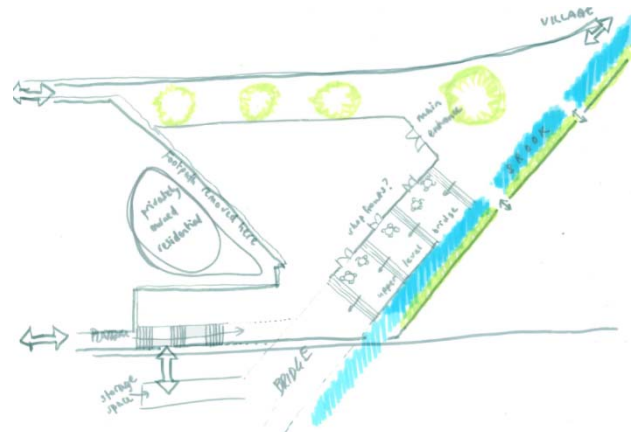
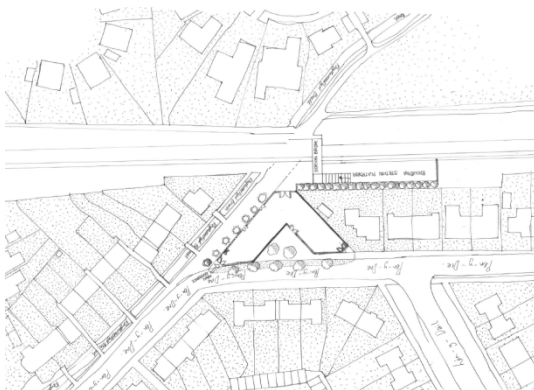
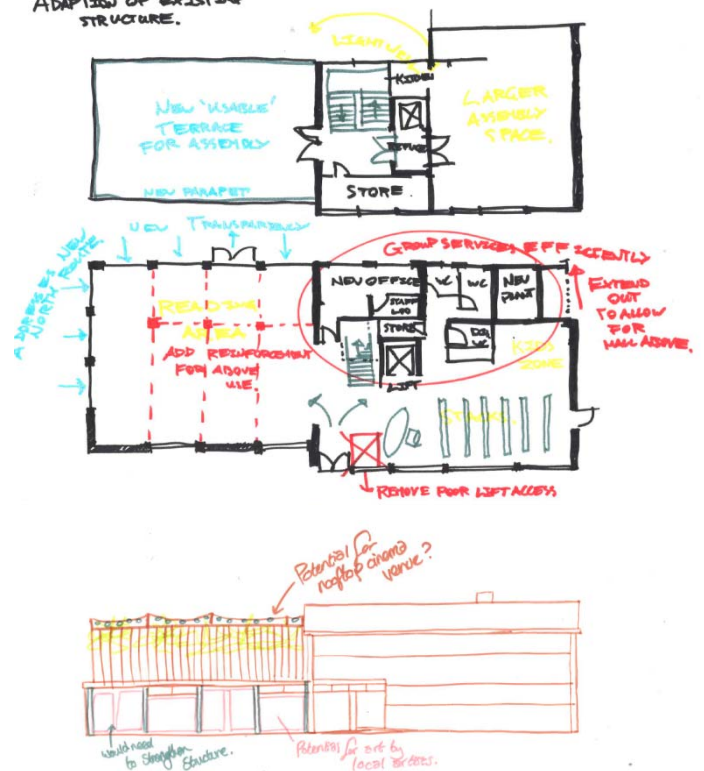


1. Quick thinking space/reading area
 2. Flexible - functional space for living
- flexible + huddle
- film club (non-venue type) and art classes - flexible lighting system (non-venue type) (flexible lighting system)
- building space / open club / evening classes
- stage for theatre / initial production / film show / exhibition space (local art school / art club / library / children)
- what's the club
- film
- potential for further specialisation??
- Impulse: signage + communication to locals! What's on? how sustainable?
- lighting!
- reading area looking out onto green space or forest
- better connections through the library, improve connectivity / visual linkage so people are drawn in.
- station arrival - old fashioned British sign. Create a sense of arrival.

- grab + go cafe (sandwich)
- restaurant (completing the)
- small retail
- cycle repair
- bike repair?
- library original function
- book club
- children's area / play facilities / participating school??
- pop up cinema
- farmers market when existing entrance is?
- print shop (potential for local market to have space in library or using library facilities)
- computer area for residents

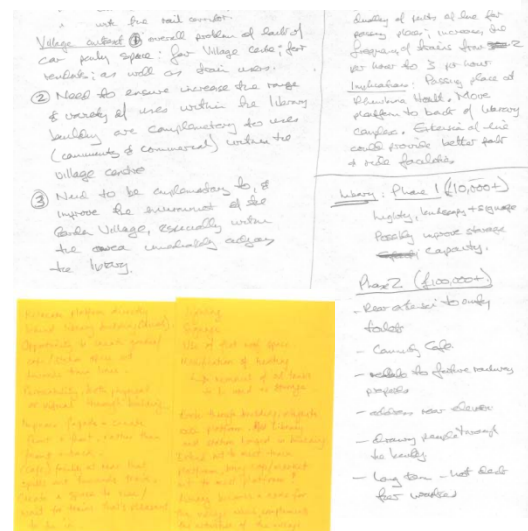
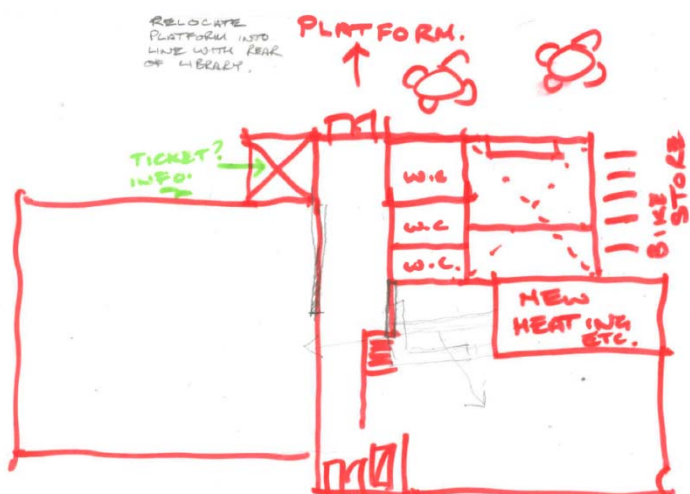
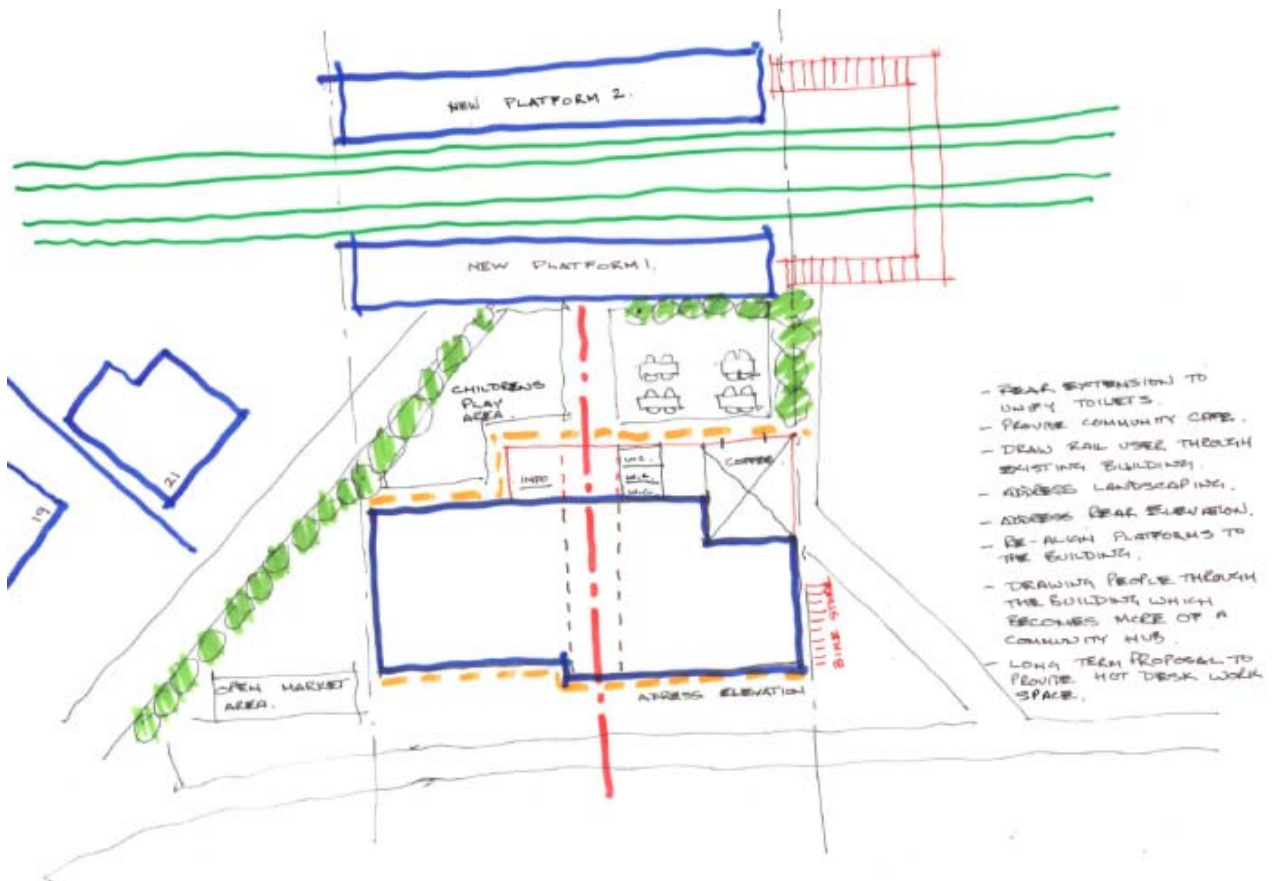
- lighting
- plant base
- improved signage + communication about events (to library)
- remove bridge by book

ADAPTION OF EXISTING STRUCTURE.



Team Pen Y Dre:

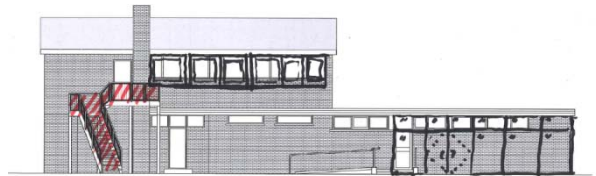
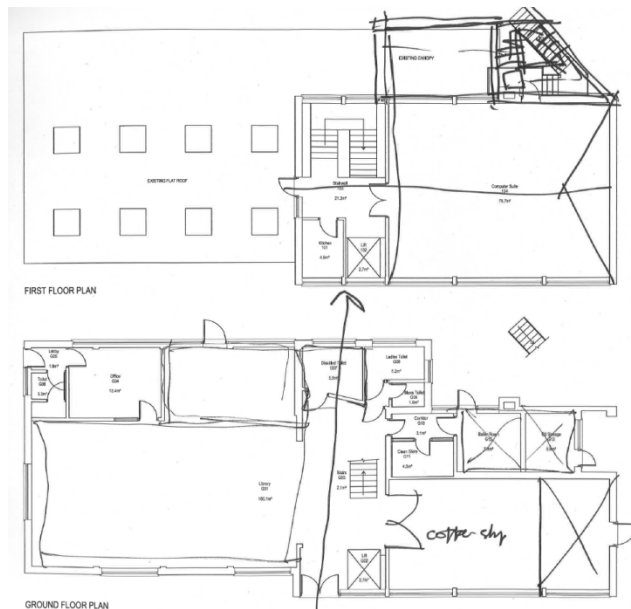
- Create a walk through and open up rear of the building
- Coffee shop.
- Platform relocated parallel to rear elevation wire commercial coffee shop.
- Double facing, with landscaping to draw people through the building.
- Station community facility.
- Complementary to existing activities in the village centre.



Team Beulah Road

Three key areas

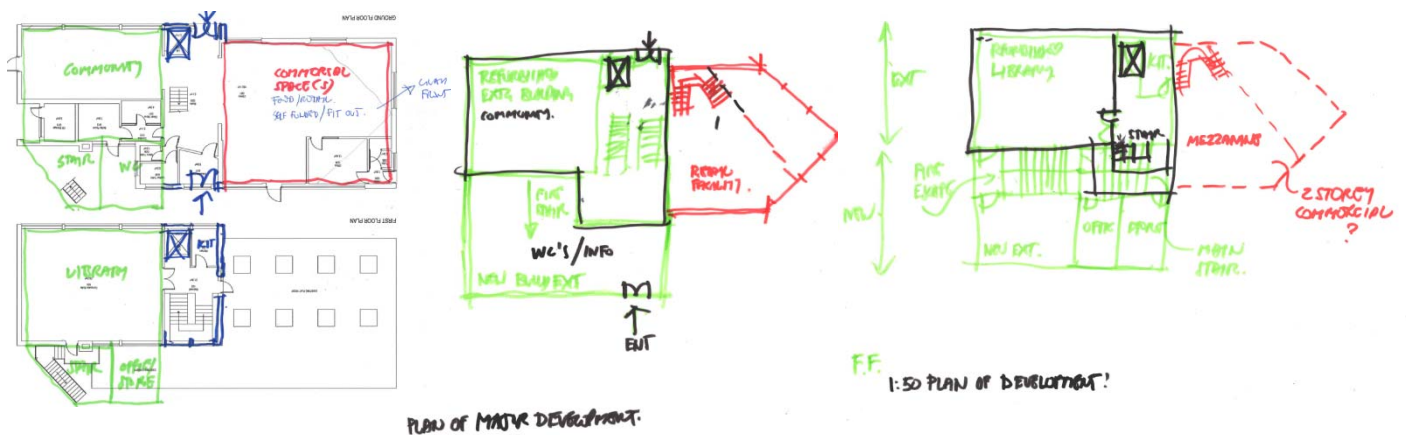
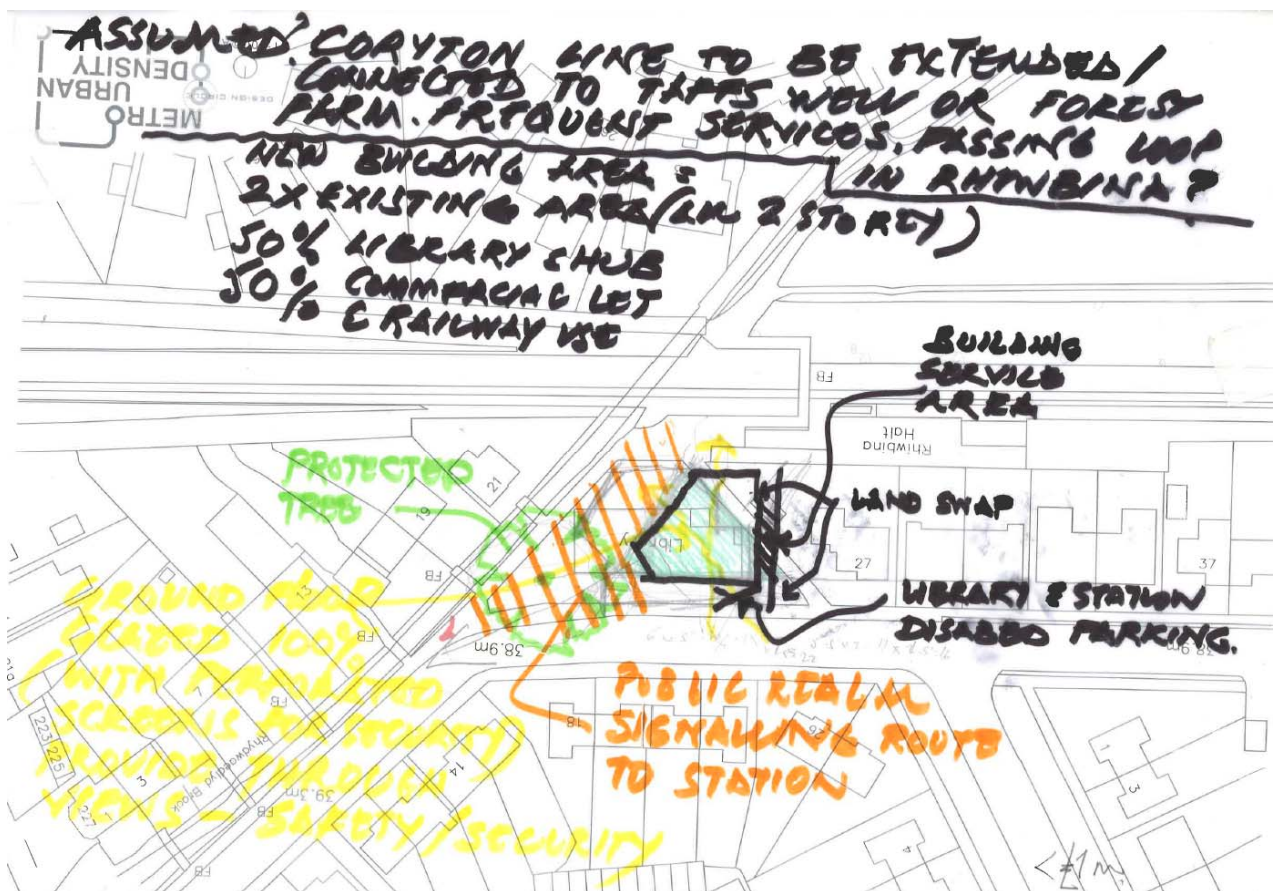
- 1 - Visibility station street library
- 2 - Flexibility
- 3 - Connections
- Direction to the village important.
- Improvement to soften edges, opening areas more glazing.
- Flexibility internally replacing stairwell to front to allowing flexibility and functionality of the library.



Team Heol Y Deri

On assumption of wider context

- Redeveloping the size. 50% commercial
- New route that creates a village focal point.
- Potential for land swap with adjacent housing allowing easier planning for the site.
- Visibility and permeability to ground floor.



#FLASHMUD1 :

RHIWBINA LIBRARY & STATION

With thanks to:

The Friends of Rhiwbina Library and member of Design Circle who helped with the organisation.

All attendees for giving of their own time and taking part in this event.

MUD is an initiative started by Design Circle, which is the southern branch of the Royal Society of Architects in Wales (RSAW).