

RETAIN REFURBISH REUSE

INFORMATION SHEET 2

Why is it essential to retain the Drill Hall?

Opinion on the Drill Hall is divided, some say “Knock it down, it’s ugly” while others fight to save it. Let’s look at some facts and information about this building to see why it is critical to retain the building for the future of Port Royal, even if it is ugly and neglected today.

Consider the answers to the following question:

- *What would replace the building and how would a new building be funded?*

Also consider:

- *If we could get the facilities we want in the existing shell and improve the outside*
- *What we would lose if it was demolished*

Public feedback has shown that people would like a mix of community facilities, a bar/restaurant and maybe a performance space at Port Royal. The hard reality is that funding a new building and facilities from scratch is very difficult if not impossible. Commercial developers need to make a profit and expensive apartments are usually the best way to get a good return, especially by the sea. You might get a restaurant, but nothing else.

The alternative is to use the existing Drill Hall to house those facilities and community uses and to provide income to maintain the building long term. Perhaps with extra money to fund other refurbishment around the area. Is that really possible? **Yes!**

The building is key: grant funding can be obtained to refurbish and reuse an existing building. If the Drill Hall is demolished that funding is no longer available. So, look at that “ugly building” as a money-generating machine not a pile of bricks! Funding can support a project in the early stages (perhaps to pay someone to develop the ideas and apply for more funding) as well as for refurbishment costs. Match funding is also available. There are many examples of successful projects, including: <http://www.princes-regeneration.org/projects/>

Sidmouth Town Council (STC) are best placed to apply for funding, as they are an official body. A community group could be established to do manage this, ideally with STC support.

The Drill Hall is large: there are two floors, making it twice the size of Stowford. That’s plenty of space for all kinds of activities – to generate income and for the community. It’s also possible to reinstate the balcony that used to run down the side of the building (perhaps by moving the toilets and opening-up the space for seating and activities, who knows!).

Only the Drill Hall can be used as a base to get grant funding for community-led projects, if it is knocked down no-one could apply for these grants.

The Drill Hall is vital because of this, that’s why we want to retain it. What do you think?