

The Acquisition of Melksham Blue Pool for the Purpose of Combining it with the Melksham Assembly Hall

Wiltshire Council, in their planning application for the building of Melksham Campus, plan to demolish the Blue Pool building, infill the pool, and sell the land for private ownership.

However, there remains an open question as to who actually owns the land where the Blue Pool resides. This needs to be resolved before a full decision as to the next step.

HISTORY

Melksham and Urban District Council bought the land from Avon Indian Rubber Co in 1959 for use as a swimming pool. It then opened under the operation of MUDC.

In 1984, West Wiltshire District Council built the leisure centre in Trowbridge, but the Castle Place site was owned by Norwich Union Group and the property was then leased for 25 years for the sports centre.

In 1988, WWDC ran several advertisements in various newspapers announcing: "Indoor pools at Warminster, Westbury, Bradford-on-Avon, and this summer the new blue pool opening in Melksham." Renovations had been made by WWDC to the Blue Pool; however, the grand opening had been delayed due to a number of failures.

From these reports, it is apparent that WWDC paid for the renovation and/or building of Wiltshire leisure centres. But it is not clear if the Melksham Blue Pool land was actually purchased or leased from MUDC, or, if, in the 1970s, there was simply an asset transfer.

PROPOSAL TO ACQUIRE BLUE POOL

Would it be practical for Melksham Town Council to obtain the Blue Pool and combine it with the Assembly Hall for a vast improvement, at a sensible cost? This could be either by an asset transfer from Wiltshire Council, or claiming its rightful ownership.

Wiltshire Council would not incur the added and costly expense of demolishing the building and removing the large water tanks that are currently within the Assembly

Hall. In view of this cost savings, they might be persuaded to accept an asset transfer agreement or peppercorn purchase price.

COMBINE THE BLUE POOL AND ASSEMBLY HALL

The building of the Blue Pool could then be incorporated into the Assembly Hall to offer several benefits such as:

- A new public entrance with reception desk and reception area
- An easier entrance point into the main hall that does not conflict with the flow of people as it does in the existing Assembly Hall Bar area (this would be achieved by opening a hole in the wall to the right of the entrance)
- Repurposing the existing Blue Pool men's locker room to make male, female and accessible toilets, which would be larger than the existing ones in the Assembly Hall
- Removing the women's locker room and storage area to create a large space that, when combined with the gym, can house a museum that includes an exhibition space and lecture area
- Infilling the pool area could add parking spaces that would be dedicated to the Assembly Hall and relieve the parking at Melksham Campus and provide parking for Melksham Town Council purposes

STAFFING

Staffing for this would solve an existing issue.

The area behind the reception desk in the Blue Pool is an office of ample size for staff. Hire a full-time person to work as Office Manager, Monday through Friday, 9-5. The responsibilities would include:

- Greeting the public in person and on the phone for the purpose of buying event tickets, booking an event, answering general questions, etc
- Managing the Assembly Hall accounts
- Arranging staff hours and volunteers for events and bar
- Co-ordinating working group meetings and taking minutes
- Overseeing advertising and marketing

As this method would isolate the Assembly Hall as its own entity, this would free up work responsibilities of managers

currently feeling overworked, with this person reporting to and working directly under the Town Clerk.

The Assembly Hall would benefit from having museum volunteers who could, in turn cover for this officer's lunch breaks, etc. Likewise, the reverse.

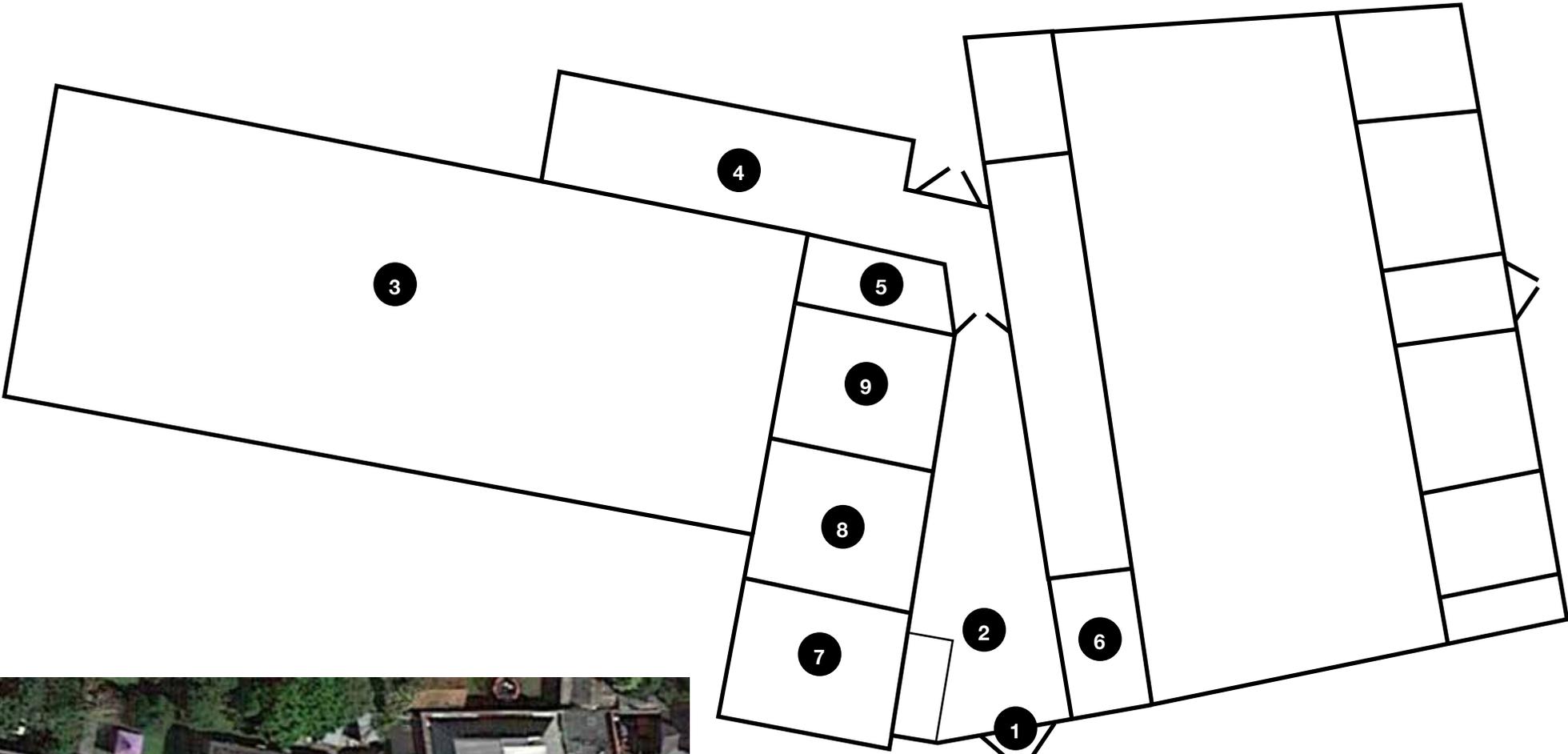


This document can be found at:
<http://Melksham.Town/BluePool>

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EXISTING: Blue Pool (numbered areas) and Assembly Hall



- 1 Blue Pool Entrance
- 2 Reception
- 3 Swimming Pool
- 4 Gym
- 5 Storage
- 6 Water Tanks
- 7 Staff Office
- 8 Mens Locker
- 9 Womens Locker

1 FRONT ENTRANCE



2 RECEPTION AREA

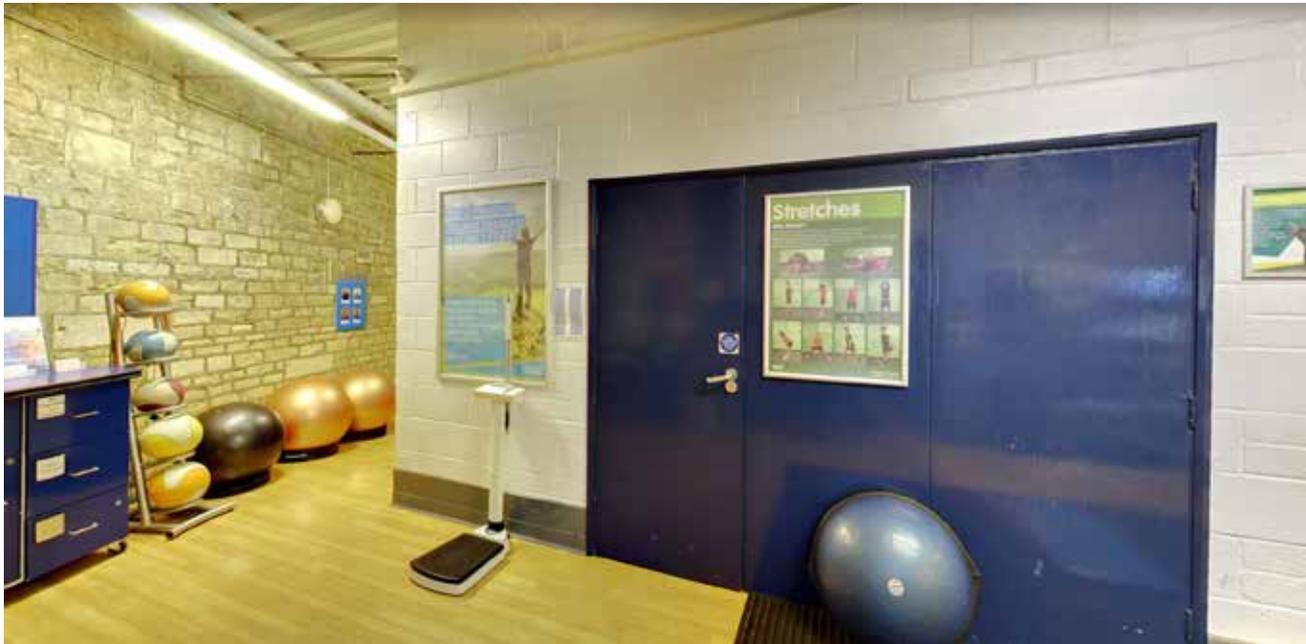


3 SWIMMING POOL



Blue Pool as it existed when still operating

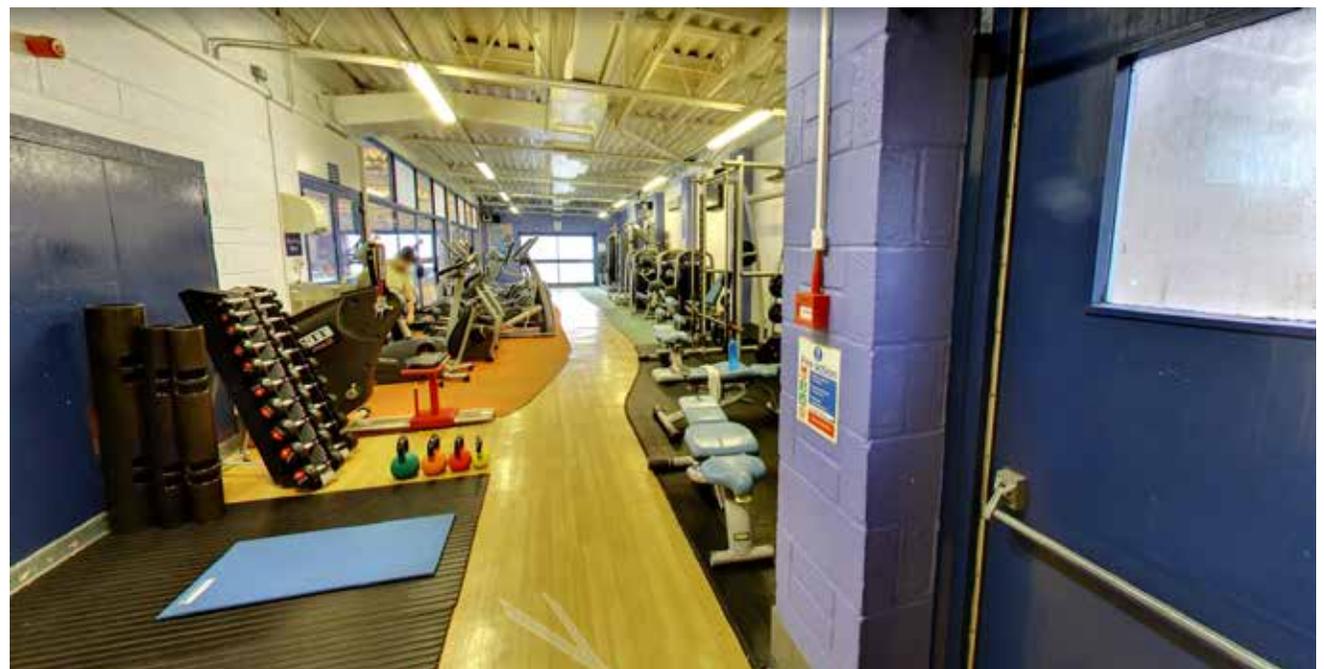
4 GYM AREA



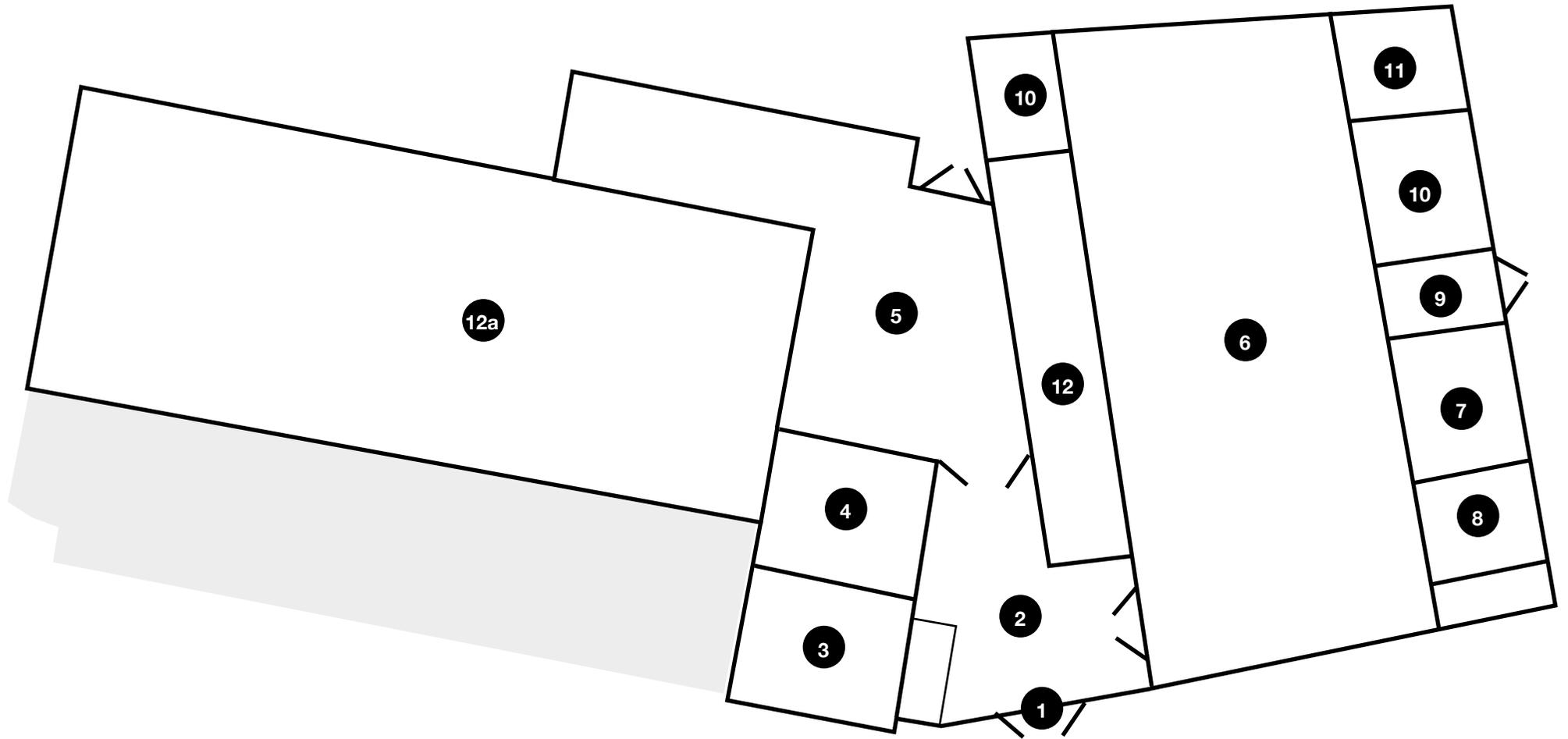
This view is facing the entrance door of the gym, down small hallway on the left. Behind the blue doors is **storage**. 5



View down the hallway looking toward front entrance doors



PROPOSED: Revised Assembly Hall plus Museum



 Dedicated car parking for Assembly Hall

12a Storage

1 New Main Entrance

2 Reception

3 Staff Office

4 M/F/Universal Loos

5 Museum

6 Assembly Hall (existing)

7 Lounge (existing)

8 Bar (existing)

9 Emergency Exit/Staff Entrance

10 Storage

11 Dressing Rooms (existing)

12 Kitchen/storage (existing)