



Charity No. 1098126

HARP's vision for a New Accommodation and Training Centre At the Darnley Hotel



Nicky Houston
Property Development manager
HARP Southend
117 York Road
Southend
SS1 2DL
nicky@harpssouthend.co.uk
www.harpssouthend.co.uk

HARP

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HARP

Executive Summary

HARP is the only comprehensive homeless service in Southend aimed at enabling people to move forward with their lives by providing advice, support, accommodation and meaningful activity programmes as well as emergency homeless services. The Council's Voluntary Grant has funded Day Centre staff for over 20 years.

The Valkyrie Road Day Centre has been the centre of operation. However, this building is now in a seriously dilapidated state and the lease on the Night Shelter is due to expire this year and **HARP** needs to find alternative premises.

HARP has identified the Darnley Hotel as suitable premises and requires change of use to refurbish the Darnley Hotel as a new **Accommodation and Training Centre**, which could incorporate both services, an outreach medical service and enable **HARP** to expand its support and employment training as well as accommodation.

Whilst there are no technical issues involved in this application, **HARP** recognise that significant plans within any given location require sensitivity to existing local residents, and are having a 4 week public consultation within their 12 week consultation process.

HARP believes that their presence will have a positive effect on the locality as there are no community services supporting vulnerable people living in the area. Hence there is a high level of anti-social behaviour, disturbance and drug dealing with people generally loitering in the area, causing increasing concern among local residents. **HARP** believes that by creating a positive environment for individuals, their resulting wellbeing contributes to a more positive environment within an area.

The Darnley has been empty for 5 years, as a result the building is at risk of becoming derelict, and subject to crime, which cannot improve whilst the property it is left empty and without security.

The Darnley Hotel

- 18 bed hotel
- Closed since October 2005 as it was economically unviable as a hotel
- Originally 3 adjoining 2 storey houses, nos. 103,105 & 107 York Road, Southend
- Large gardens to the rear and stands in a plot of approx half an acre
- Existing parking
- Basement area for storage

The Darnley Hotel Redevelopment Plan

- Night Shelter and Day Centre facilities under one roof to provide a seamless service
- 21 bed Emergency and short-term accommodation
- Provision of 3 Training rooms
- Planned provision of outreach medical facilities, and access to other agencies.

HARP

INTRODUCTION

HARP is the only comprehensive homeless service in Southend aimed at enabling people to move forward with their lives by providing support, accommodation and meaningful activity programmes (see Appendix I) as well as emergency homeless services. The Council's Voluntary Grant has funded Day Centre staff for over 20 years.

In January 2010 **HARP** took over the management of the Acorn Project in York Road, and Acorn is now fully integrated into **HARP**. Since they became involved in Acorn they introduced **HARP's** support services to the young people housed in the 30 accommodation units under their management in York Road, and have seen positive development in these peoples' lives and the resulting wellbeing improves their relationships within the community. **HARP** have actively engaged in the community offering their premises, and providing representation on the York Road Restorative Justice Community Circle, which has now been disbanded as it has achieved its' goals. **HARP** feels that they could reach other vulnerable people who are housed by various agencies in the vicinity and support them in similar ways if they were given the opportunity to bring their services to this location. The new Centre could greatly benefit local residents by offering advice, accommodation, training and employment to the many vulnerable people living in the locale who are currently left to their own devices. Part of the new Centre's role will be to work with local residents to ensure that the neighborhood becomes a safe and pleasant place to live by keeping the environment clear of rubbish and encouraging people off the street and into the Centre where there will be opportunities for local people to improve their physical and financial wellbeing and move towards more positive lifestyles.

The Valkyrie Road Day Centre has been the centre of operation. However, this building is now in a seriously dilapidated state and **HARP** requires change of use to refurbish the Darnley Hotel as a new **Accommodation and Training Centre**, which will combine both its old Day Centre and Night Shelter services, and allow them to expand the training and accommodation facilities.

This Centre of excellence will provide not only all the existing services but also improve its accommodation and training provision in line with Government policy to motivate people towards positive lifestyles.

HARP is able to raise sufficient funds to purchase and refurbish the building currently known as the Darnley Hotel. However, the difficulty is that it requires change of use from a hotel to "sui generis". Whilst there are no planning issues to suggest such an application would not be successful, it is felt that as **HARP's** previous planning application for Valkyrie Road was a somewhat contentious issue, it is likely that again this could prove controversial and, therefore, **HARP** wishes to gain the support of the Council and local residents before making the application.

This document puts forward **HARP's** case for engendering support.

BACKGROUND

Rationale for the development of a Training and Accommodation Centre

- **HARP**'s core services are on 2 sites, the Day Centre at Valkyrie Road and the Night Shelter in York Road.
- The existing Valkyrie Day Centre is in a dilapidated state and is costing a great deal to maintain. Insufficient space and the design layout severely limit opportunities for further developing services there, as only the ground floor is useable.
- Limited space means the Government's 'Places of Change' recommendations for meaningful activities within the Day Centre are very limited.
- The Night Shelter has a lease which ends in 2011.
- Both the Day Centre and Night Shelter need extensive refurbishment.
- The Night Shelter has shared accommodation (only 14 bedspaces in 8 rooms) as well as shared washing facilities.
- The Night Shelter is closed during the daytime which means that there is a gap in services, when the most vulnerable client group leave the Night Shelter at 8.30 am until the Day Centre opens at 9.00 am, and similarly at the back end of the day when the Day Centre closes at 4.30 pm and the Night Shelter opens at 5.00pm. These small breaks are not insurmountable, but the walk, in inclement weather and sometimes the distractions along the way can cause setbacks in recovery and safety.
- This development would not only allow **HARP** to maintain the number of emergency beds, but also update the facilities in line with current Government's 'Places of Change' guidelines to give independent rather than shared facilities.
- The provision of move-on units on-site would not only add to the stock of this type of accommodation, but guarantee the quality, in line with the Council's plans to improve accommodation. Income from these move-on units would help fund the Day Centre services, which currently rely on donations for its overhead costs.
- The tenants in the move-on accommodation would have direct access to the Day Centre and increase their chances of rehabilitation into independent living.
- With a new **Accommodation and Training Centre**, **HARP** would provide advice, support and employment training as well as accommodation, and a seamless service as both the Day and Night Services would be under one roof.

Needs Analysis

- Rough Sleeping has increased year on year since 2004-5 from 50 to 118 in 2009-10.
- The demand for the Night Shelter facilities has increased by 30%.
- There are believed to be in the region of 12 rough sleepers in the Borough at any one time that we have no suitable accommodation for.
- The number of people using the services continues to be in the region of 1,700 per annum. Of these 50% will be in accommodation but are at risk of losing their tenancy or living in inadequate accommodation i.e. without cooking or washing facilities. 50% will be in need of accommodation and are likely to be either sofa surfing or rough sleeping.
- 40% are aged 30 or younger.
- 26% will have drug or alcohol issues. This has increased by 6% compared with last year. There is separate specialist provision for this group of homeless people.

To meet the identified need, together with the Government recommendations of the way forward for Homeless Day Centres, a plan was devised to develop a new Centre and additional move on accommodation for those client groups identified in the Needs Analysis; i.e. rough sleepers, drug users and young people.

Valkyrie Day Centre Redevelopment Plan

The original plan was to demolish the Day Centre, which **HARP** owns, and rebuild it to include Night Shelter accommodation. Thanks to a great deal of support from local residents and Councillors, **HARP** obtained Planning Permission in July 2009.

However, as Trusts and other charitable organisations are generally advised not look at a project before planning is achieved, fundraising hit the recession just as it was taking hold, and **HARP** was unable to raise the £3 million needed within any kind of workable timeframe. An in-depth review of the redevelopment plan followed which identified that the scheme was no longer viable.

A variety of alternative options were also considered which were also found not to be feasible. As a result **HARP's** Board of Trustees made the decision to seek alternative premises for the new Centre.

The Darnley Hotel Redevelopment Plan

HARP has now found a suitable property which is ideally placed. It would be an "Accommodation and Training Centre" providing all current Day Centre facilities together with emergency and short stay accommodation plus extended facilities for training, a bespoke medical room with opportunities for outreach surgeries for medical and other agency services.

THE DARNLEY



Existing Accommodation

- 18 bed hotel
- Closed since October 2005 as it was economically unviable as a hotel
- Originally 3 adjoining 2 storey houses, nos. 103,105 & 107 York Road, Southend
- Large gardens to the rear and stands in a plot of approx half an acre
- Existing parking for at least 7 cars
- Basement area for storage

Potential accommodation on the site

- Emergency accommodation and Day Centre
- 7 short stay rooms, two being 2 person i.e.9 beds, all with en-suite facilities
- Day Centre facilities to include:-
 - Reception
 - Kitchen
 - Dining area
 - Waiting area
 - 3 offices / interview rooms
 - Male showers and toilets
 - Female showers and toilets
 - Laundry facilities
 - 12 units for Longer-stay accommodation
 - 2 / 3 Meaningful Activity rooms
 - Outreach room which may be used by Health, SBC, voluntary services for interventions, surgeries and signposting services
 - All the longer-stay accommodation to provide independent cooking facilities and private bathroom facilities,
 - Storage for donations in the basement areas

Why this particular site brings added value

- Providing services at the centre of the need, as there are a number of agencies housing vulnerable people in that area.
- Deliverable within the next financial year, and therefore enables both the Day Centre and Night Shelter issues to be resolved.
- Enables an increase in services in time to meet all the Central Government objectives of eliminating rough sleeping by 2012.
- Ideally located close to the centre of town, the Acorn Project and HARP Head Office, reducing staff travelling time and increasing management efficiency
- Close proximity to HARP's 26 bed sits and 4 flats in York Road that are managed on behalf of Estuary Housing Association, allowing economies of scale across services.

- Removes the Day Centre from the immediate vicinity of the two rehabilitation hostels in Westcliff. This will give these programmes a greater opportunity to develop independent living skills for the participants
- Large gardens to be used for recreation and meaningful activity , including an allotment programme
- Large patio areas to provide on-site smoking area
- The Community Training Centre facilities will include:
 - Training and meeting rooms
 - Community group meeting facilities
 - Outreach room which may be used by Health, SBC, voluntary services for interventions, surgeries and signposting services
 - Interview rooms
 - Coffee bar and dining area
 - Washing and laundry facilities
 - A welcoming reception area

Planning Considerations

- Within the Planning Policy, the hotel is below the threshold of 20 units and has not been used as such since 2005
- It is in a sustainable location i.e. close to town & with good public transport links
- HARP already runs a successful Night Shelter in York Road and the new property will allow them to build onto and consolidate the services
- The Police are very supportive, and have data on the low level of incidents
- 24hour surveillance
- The existing on-site parking coupled with the parking at the Head Office at 117 York Road more than accommodates the parking requirements
- Disabled access to be created at the front of the building
- Established record of managing clients attending the service and being able to minimise the congregating of clients outside the property envelope
- Enhancing the look of the street

Consultation

HARP is already part of the local residents group in York Road

HARP has prepared a communication plan, which outlines key and events so members and local residents are fully informed if this project receives support.

HARP will initially invite the local residents association and Members to a consultation open day at the Darnley on the 10th March to explain what their plans are and how this will be achieved.

HARP have asked and addressed the following questions:-

1. Will these Applications create local interest?

HARP understands that there will be an element in the local community who may be concerned about the application, but giving consideration to the following key points about the Day Centre facility should ease their concerns.

- Of the people **HARP** help, 74% have no issues other than family breakdown.
- Whilst the remaining 26% have mental, drug and alcohol issues, **HARP** have specialist accommodation elsewhere in the Borough which enables them to offer services where they can help them.
- **HARP** provides a community resource, with help, advice and training to get people back on their feet.
- At a time of Public Sector cuts, **HARP** are going to be increasing services at no extra cost to the public purse, and this is a “good news” story.
- **HARP** enjoys a very good working relationship with the local media, they have continued to support **HARP** with positive coverage.
- **HARP**'s communication and consultation approach enables them to address issues before they divert from the positive services being offered.

2. Are service users local to Southend?

Over 93% of **HARP**'s client group during the last financial year 2009-10, were from the borough, with 0.6% of the transient homeless settling in Southend.

All service users seeking assistance because they are homeless or at risk of losing their accommodation undertake an in depth assessment with a specialist worker which includes the questions “If you have lived in Southend for less than 6 months, please tell us your previous borough and postcode” and, “How long have you been living in Southend?”. People from outside the borough will be assisted to return home if appropriate.

Service users not homeless but housed inadequately e.g. no cooking or washing facilities and using **HARP**'s basic services such as a hot meal and clothing are only recorded by name and address and are assumed to be local to Southend.

There were a total of 1,646 service users in 2009/10 of which 741 were either homeless or at risk of homelessness. 122 people were from outside the Borough. Of these, **HARP**'s records show 11 people found accommodation.

3. Is there a need for another agency for vulnerable adults in this area?

There are no community services supporting vulnerable people living in the area. Hence there is a higher than average level of anti-social behaviour, disturbance and drug dealing with people generally loitering in the area, causing increasing concern among local residents.

Furthermore, the proposed building is becoming progressively dilapidated, encouraging further criminal activity.

The Training and Accommodation Centre is an exciting opportunity which will provide a unique service aimed at reducing anti social behaviour; tidying up the street and offering advice, support, accommodation and training to enable people to live more positive and healthy lifestyles in a much improved and pleasant neighbourhood.

HARP would be able to take their services to the centre of the need rather than these residents having to travel across town.

4. Won't this mean that the number of people loitering on the street will be increased?

By **HARP** providing the Accommodation and Training Centre means that everyone in need within the area gets access to services, and gives them somewhere with constructive activities to go to. **HARP**'s outreach teams actively encourage people off the streets and into an environment where they can be helped & occupied. The plans **HARP** for the building involve having the entrance and reception area at the rear of the building, so their visitors will be welcomed at the rear of the premises and off the street.

5. Won't this type of Accommodation and Training Centre be detrimental to the area?

HARP's presence will have a positive effect on the locality. The Darnley has been empty for 5 years, as a result the building is at risk of become derelict, and subject to crime, which cannot improve whilst the property it is left empty and without security.

Refurbishment

- Complete refurbishment and overhaul of the fabric of the building
- Change the colour of the building to blend more closely with the street scene

- Introduce soft landscaping at the front of the building to improve the appearance
- Creation of disabled access
- Improvement to front access & creation of side entrance and reception
- Renovation of the garden to be carried out as a Meaningful Activity programme

These works will improve the fabric of the building and improve the look of the road; in addition the outreach and opportunities for other organisations to offer advice i.e. energy efficiency will enable an improvement in the economic viability of the buildings and the residents.

The timetable for the project

- Start date will be one month from obtaining Planning consent.
- Estimate for 4 months

Running the project

Staffing

Staffed 09:00 to 21:00, by Project Staff and 21:00 to 09:00 by Security Staff, 7 days per week. Day services will not be open to the general public at weekends – just for residents only.

Security

- Overnight Security Staff 7 days per week.
- CCTV cameras at strategic points monitored by staff and security 24 hours per day

Impact on Services

This should be minimal in the short term, as no services will close. In the long term they will be expanded.

- Additional space means additional Meaningful Activities run by **HARP** and other agencies.
- More privacy for interviewing distressed service users.
- Additional units mean **HARP** will have the capacity to ensure more local homeless people have a bed.
- The York Road Night Shelter service will close.

How this service in this location will improve the area.

- Improved look of the building which is becoming increasingly dishevelled.
- Discourage loitering by encouraging people to use the Centre.
- Discourage drug taking in the area by providing assistance into harm minimisation programmes.
- Offer housing advice and support to local residents experiencing difficulties with landlords.
- CCTV cameras to assist in reduction of crime outside the location.
- Actively support the local residents' association to improve the look of the area.
- **HARP** are proposing a totally refurbished, environmentally friendly, vibrant building

How moving the Day Centre services from Valkyrie Rd will impact that area.

- HARP are conscious that having had an established Centre in one location for a number of years, there may be confusion to both clients and people dropping donations and **HARP** would have to advertise the move widely.
- There would be an empty building for a period time, and that is not beneficial to any area. However, **HARP's** intention would be to sell the Valkyrie Road site as soon as was practical and whilst they cannot speak for any potential purchaser they would imagine that they would be looking for residential use, which **HARP** are sure would be positively viewed by the existing residents.

CONCLUSION

A new Accommodation and Training Centre will take a comprehensive support service for vulnerable people to the centre of need and greatly improve the area, making it a safer and more pleasant place to live. **HARP** strives to create a positive and more sympathetic environment for service users and residents alike.

It will provide opportunities for vulnerable people living in the area to obtain the advice and support they need to sustain their tenancy.

It will provide opportunities for vulnerable people to gain the skills and confidence they need to train for employment.

It will offer support to young people to learn the skills to live independently.

It will link to health services to assist those in the area to move towards a healthier lifestyle.

Facilities will include:

- Existing Day Centre facilities

Plus:-

- Training and meeting rooms
- Community group meeting facilities
- Medical room with access to chiropodist, health visitor and doctor
- Meeting room for agencies to meet their clients
- External courtyard and green space
- 21 bed Emergency and short-term accommodation
- Deliverable within the next financial year, in time to meet all the Central Government objectives of eliminating rough sleeping by 2012.
- Providing services at the centre of the need, particularly for a number of supported housing programmes that provide accommodation only
- Providing services to the centre of the client base, both housed and homeless.
- Ideally located close to the centre of town and the Acorn Project and Head Office, reducing staff travelling time and increasing management efficiency

With the current Day Centre at Valkyrie Road no longer being fit for purpose due to the dilapidated state of the building, **HARP** could be faced with losing their day services altogether, this is the heart of the organisation and the referral point for all activities. In these harsh economic times there are an increasing number of people requiring assistance, but who fall outside the eligibility for council assistance. Without this resource there would be an additional burden on the Council, as there would be a knock on effect increasing the pressures on SBC with an increase in Rough Sleepers, an increase in people at risk of losing their tenancies, and the town would be less able to provide emergency food, clothing or shelter. There may be an increase in crime and without support there may be a higher instance of re-offending.

HARP believe this is an opportunity to work in partnership with the local authority, statutory and voluntary agencies to help vulnerable adults learn the skills to manage a tenancy and gain meaningful employment and at the same time improve the environment for local residents, and commercial enterprise.

We welcome your comments

e-mail: darnleyconsultation@harpSouthend.co.uk

Appendix I

Support, Accommodation and Meaningful Activities ('SAM') Programmes

HARP has many years of successfully working with people whose accommodation continually breaks down. **HARP's** experience has identified that three key elements need to be in place to enable people to sustain their accommodation and live a more positive and healthier lifestyle:

Support

Accommodation

Meaningful Activity

Support

Specialist workers carry out individual assessments to identify the underlying cause of a person's homelessness. The worker and client then work together to produce a support plan aimed at helping the client identify what they wish to achieve and how it will be achieved. It is crucial to identify the right level of support, the appropriate type of accommodation and Meaningful Activities and additionally linking into other agencies e.g. medical services.

Accommodation

HARP has identified that certain client groups have great difficulty in accessing accommodation. These groups are young people, people coming out of prison, drug users, people with mental health issues and long term rough sleepers. **HARP** provides, or is developing, accommodation to meet this gap in service for these client groups.

Current accommodation managed by **HARP**

- 14 emergency beds, in 8 bedrooms with shared facilities in the Night Shelter in York Road.
- 26 bed-sit units and 4 flats managed on behalf of Estuary Housing in York Road (young people).
- 7 flats originally owned by Serving the Homeless and Acorn, which are being transferred to **HARP** as a result of the merger. These are within the Southend / Westcliff area (young people).
- 15 Specialist units for drug related programmes, on 2 separate sites in Westcliff.

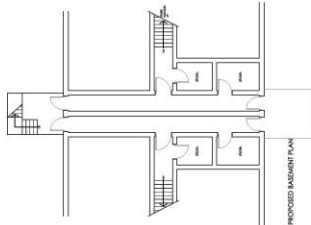
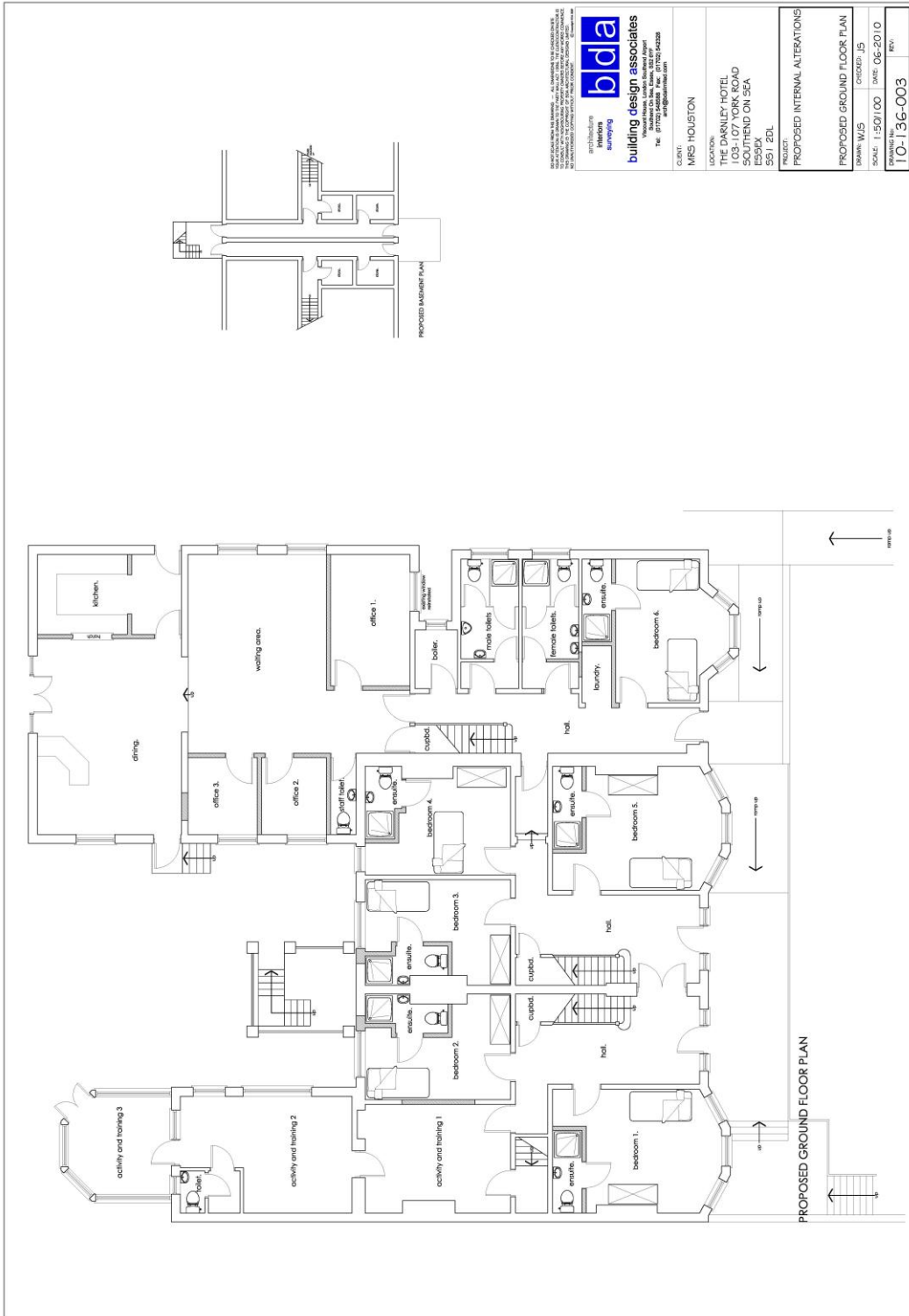
Meaningful Activity

- Meaningful Activity is an umbrella term for a variety of activities which give purpose and meaning to people's lives and has been found to have a profound impact in motivating homeless people to turn their lives around and live healthier, more positive lifestyles.
- Education and training, as well as other meaningful activities are nationally recognised as a vital element in enabling people to live independently and are therefore a requirement of Government grants to local authorities.
- **HARP's** work with the Council contributes to the Council meeting its government targets. Therefore all **HARP** services are regularly monitored.
- Meaningful Activities within the new Centre will be aimed at improving health, maintaining accommodation, improving economic status and reintegration within the community.
- Courses will be provided by specialist staff and external agencies such as Lightbulb.
- Both internal and external activities will be accessed via the Centre. Examples of Meaningful Activities on offer are:

Education:	Literacy, Arts and Crafts, English, Maths, French
Health:	Football, Gym, Walking, Swimming, Healthy Eating Gardening, Allotment
Life Skills:	Tenancy Sustainment, Budgeting, Cooking
Social Skills:	Drop In Groups, Trips to Places of Interest
Employment:	Job Hunting and CVs, Volunteering, Work based Experience
Community Work:	Tree Planting in Scotland

Appendix II

PROPOSED DRAWINGS- Ground Floor



INCORPORATING
bda
ARCHITECTURE
INTERIOR
LANDSCAPE
building design associates
1000 High Street, London, SE18 6HT
Tel: (01753) 608811 Fax: (01753) 642388
www.bda.co.uk

CLIENT: MRS HOUSTON
 LOCATION: THE DAIRY HOTEL
 103-107 YORK ROAD
 SOUTHEND ON SEA
 ESSEX
 SS1 2DL
 PROJECT: PROPOSED INTERNAL ALTERATIONS
 DRAWING NO: W15
 CREATED: 15
 SCALE: 1:500/1:00
 DATE: 06-2010
 DRAWING NO: **10-136-003**
 REV:

