

ART 504: Restoration of the Whitchurch Hospital Recreation Hall into the Whitchurch Arts and Community Centre



Figure 1 – Image of the stage in Whitchurch Hospital Recreation Hall (Image taken from <https://www.bcd-urbex.com/whitchurch-hospital-cardiff/>)

Contents Page

1.0 Introduction	3
1.1 Project	3
1.2 Structure of Report	3
1.3 Resources	4
1.4 Legislation, Principles and Guidelines	4
2.0 Historical Resource	6
2.1 Location	6
2.2 Site	9
2.3 Layout	9
3.0 Historical Development	11
3.1 History of Mental Health	11
3.2 History of the Hospital	13
4.0 Development Plan	14
4.1 Proposal	17
4.2 Conservation Management	20
4.3 Site Development	22
5.0 Conclusion	23
Bibliography	25

1.0 Introduction

For ease of reading, the site will be referred to as Whitchurch Hospital despite the differing names given to the hospital throughout its history. The different names will be used, where appropriate, in the discussion of the history of the building.

1.1 Project

Whitchurch Hospital was designated a Grade II listed building in 1994. The listing covers the entire hospital with the Chapel and Garden Shelters being listed separately. This project will take the impressive Recreation Hall at Whitchurch Hospital and transform it into the Whitchurch Arts and Community Centre that will serve the North of Cardiff as a cultural and community hub. The other areas will be converted into residential units with the retention of the iconic water tower, the restoration of the garden shelters and the creation of a museum reflecting the memories and history of the site.

1.2 Structure of Report

This report has been broken down into a number of sections that aims to explain the background of the site itself through to the project proposal and development plan. In section 2 the history of the site is discussed starting with a brief history of Cardiff, the history leading the construction of Cardiff City Asylum and an overview of the building itself. Section 3 will cover the Historical Development of the hospital in the context of the tangible and intangible elements of the hospital. Finally, section 4 will cover the Development Plan of the proposal covering the proposal for the Recreation Hall itself, funding options, the conservation plan for the Hall and the proposals context withing the overall development of Whitchurch Hospital.

1.3 Resources

This is a primarily desk-based report, aside from the initial and sole visit to the site on 24th October 2019. Due to the current situation regarding COVID-19 and the lockdown, a significant number of the relevant literature required for this report, is inaccessible.

1.4 Legislation, Principles and Guidelines

Cadw, Conservation Principles, 2011

Cadw is the department of the Welsh Government that oversees the protection of the historic environment in Wales.

Conservation Principles for the sustainable management of the historic environment in Wales is Cadw's guidance on the protection and conservation of Wales's historic assets. This guidance needs to be followed when undertaking any conservation or restoration work on Wales's protected historic buildings.

1. Historic Assets will be managed to sustain their values;
2. Understanding the significance of historic assets is vital;
3. The historic environment is a shared resource;
4. Everyone will be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment;
5. Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent and consistent;
6. Documenting and learning from decisions is essential.

With these in mind, Cadw have also provided the following values so that the significance of a historic asset can be determined: evidential value, historical value, aesthetic value and communal value.

Planning Act 1990 – Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas/ Historic Environment Wales Act 2016

This act designates buildings of particular significance to ensure their protection for future generations. Any proposals to alter a listed building must be granted approval by the local planning authority before any works can proceed.

2.0 Historic Site

2.1 Location

1536	Cardiff did not begin to become the city it has grown to be until it became the county town of Glamorgan in 1536
1830s	Building of the docks injected money into the Cardiff economy and saw a growth in population from migration
1905	City status recognised with the influx of national institutions not including the National Library of Wales that remained in Aberystwyth
1955	Recognised as the Capital city of Wales following a vote from the local authorities

2.2 Site (History of development and building of hospital)

At the start of the 20th century, the site of Whitchurch Hospital was in a very different surrounding than in present day. The site was chosen because of its rural location outside of the city of Cardiff to provide the benefits of open space for the patients of the hospital (Taylor, 1991). As seen in the

below map images¹, the rural village of Whitchurch had not yet been engulfed by the neighbouring city of Cardiff to become the suburb it is today.

Once the site of the asylum had been procured, a competition for the architectural contract was created which was won by the architects Oatley and Skinner who were based in Bristol and the foundations were laid in 1902.

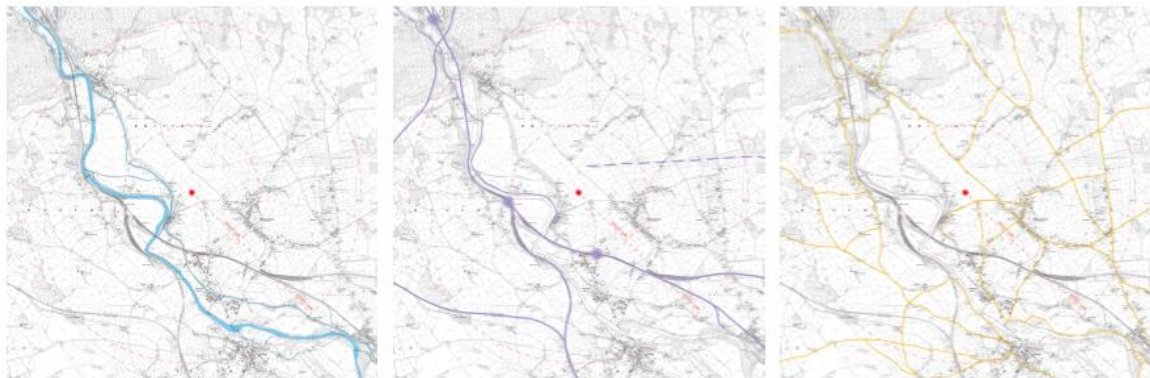


Figure 3 – Series of annotated historic maps showing transportation links of the site (Accessed from Yunfan Zhang, 20120)

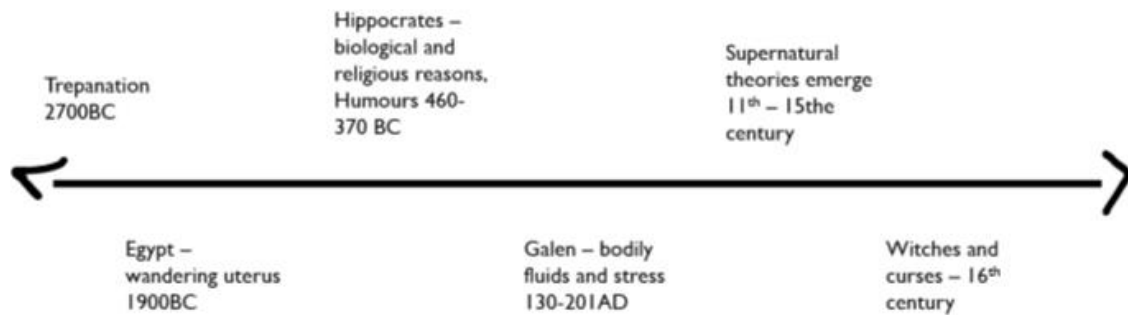
¹ 1900s Maps taken from Yunfan Zhang's report - The red dot indicated the site location of the hospital in relation to the waterways in the left image, the railway network in the middle image and the road network on the right image



Figure 3 – Site plan showing development of site over time (Accessed from Paul Hayes 2020)

3.0 Historical Development

3.1 History of Mental Health



Created by author [DB] (2019)

Figure 4 – Early history of mental health timeline

Above is an illustrated timeline created by the author to illustrate the early histories of mental health and its treatment leading to the establishment of the modern treatments and understanding of mental health. In the table below will be a brief description of the history of mental health so that a context can be given on the history of treatment seen at Whitchurch Hospital

1601-late eighteenth century	Introduction of the Poor Law act and further legislation in this period for the restraining of patients with mental health. This was a common theme until the end of the eighteenth century.
1796	Tuke encouraged the use of moral treatment in Britain following on from the work of Pinel and Pussin in France.
1808 - 1845	Up until this period, 'lunatics' were put into prisons and workhouses to keep them away from the rest of society. The County Asylums Act 1808 was the first UK legislation that called for the creation of a County Asylum in every county in England and Wales but it took until 1845 before it was made compulsory with new lunacy legislation. 1834
1914-1945	The two World Wars and the inter-war years began a change in the image of Asylums. World War 1 brought about the use of Asylums as war hospitals due to the advanced equipment and facilities. This began to alter the image of asylums for the positive. Inter war years saw the investigation into asylum conditions. The outbreak of World War 2 saw the conditions worsen as overcrowding increased the spread of tuberculosis.

<p><i>1946 onwards</i></p>	<p>The NHS began to see a centralized movement of mental health treatment. Enoch Powell encouraged the reduction in funding for mental health hospitals and invested in specialised wards in general hospitals. Italy pioneered the movement towards community and outpatient treatments for the mentally ill in the 1970s. The rest of Europe followed suit leading to the closure of asylums in 1990s Britain and into the 21st century.</p>
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3.2 History of the Hospital

It can be seen in the general construction of the hospital the overall idea of moving away from the confinement seen in previous facilities around the country and more towards an open layout that encouraged greater freedom for the patients. The presence of the farm on the grounds of the asylum allowed the patients responsibility and work to help to contribute to the mostly self-sufficient facility. This idea of normality, freedom and treatment for the patients is highlighted in the recreation hall allowing the patients to become involved in sports and recreational activities. Overall, the hospital is the best representation of Oatley and Skinner's collaborative work.

3.3 Running of the Hospital

Dr Edwin Goodall, the first Medical Superintendent of Whitchurch Hospital was an innovative practitioner within the mental health sector at the time. Dr Goodall wanted to drive the innovation into the treatment of mental illness further². His innovations could be seen in the disestablishment of male and female nursing norms with Matron Florence Raynes becoming responsible for all nurses at the facility during the period of World War 1. With the drive towards the quality of treatment

² As seen in Dr Goodalls article found in the bibliography

provided at the hospital, Goodall recognised the importance of having the highest qualified nursing staff possible.³ 1924 saw the creation of the Nurses Training School at the hospital which was available for both male and female nurses. The recognition of the work that Goodall himself carried out at the hospital and the research he undoubtedly inspired in colleagues make him a part of the intangible history of Whitchurch Hospital before his retirement in 1929.

At the outbreak of World War 1, Whitchurch hospital was utilised in treating the wounded soldiers from the front due to its advanced medical equipment and facilities becoming the Welsh Metropolitan War Hospital. This was a turning point in the negative image of asylums to places of great importance where the countries soldiers were given the best treatment available at that time (BMJ, 1920).

1948 saw the hospital being taken over by the NHS where the hospital continued to operate as a Psychiatric Hospital. Care in the community in the 1980s saw the hospital fall into decline as outpatient care became the norm. The hospital closed its doors in April 2016 with mental health care services in Cardiff being deferred to the hospital site in Llandough.

³ General Nursing Council qualification for all nursing staff

4.0 Development Plan

In terms of the significance that is specific to the Recreation Hall, it is the only remaining example of the collaboration between Skinner and Oatley as their previous Asylums have been demolished and redeveloped. Arguably, with its decoration, stained glass and barrel ceiling, it is the architects best work.

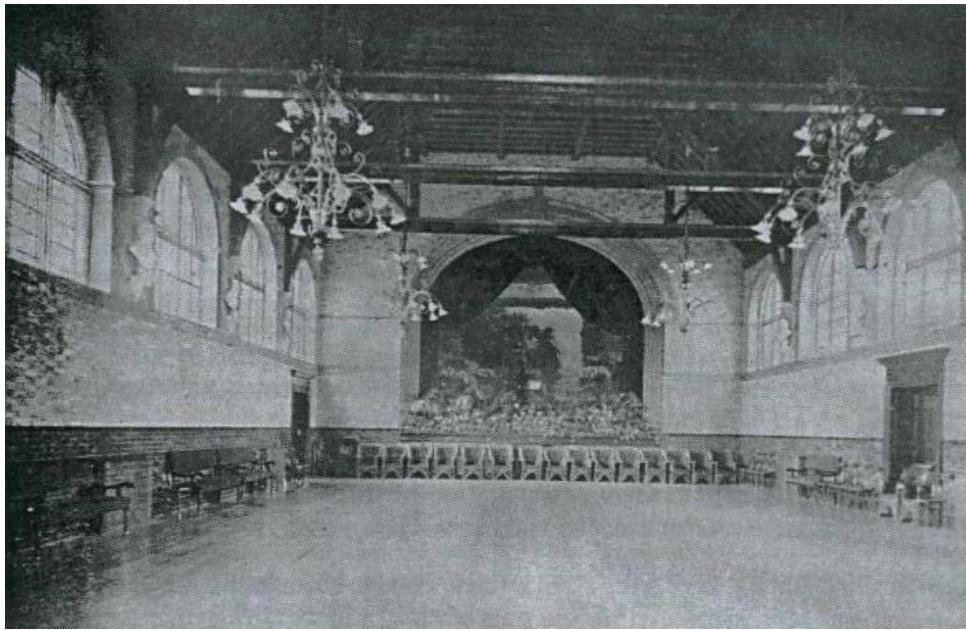


Figure 5 - Warlingham Park Hospital Recreational Hall (Accessed from <https://www.flickr.com/photos/8866197@N07/3395756568/in/photostream/> on 10-05-2020)



Figure 6 - Winwick Hospital Recreational Hall (Accessed from <http://winwickremembered.org.uk/gallery.htm> on 10-05-2020)

The Recreation Hall has suffered little in terms of deterioration when compared to much of the site. With the movement of the hospital from the Whitchurch site to Llandough in 2016 has left the hospital as a detriment to the NHS and without finding a re-use for the site, further degradation will be certain.

Externally, there is no obvious damage to the wall of the recreation hall made up of red clay brick and a lime-based mortar. Further inspection of the walls would be needed to ensure that there is no risk of damp. Further investigation of the slate roof is needed. It is visible that there is slate damage on other roofs on site. There is no serious degradation internally. Despite the obvious signs of graffiti, on initial inspection of the ceiling, windows and floor; the hall is in relatively good condition.

Previous applications have been made to the council with regards to the development of the site to include 'community' use of the recreation hall within a mixed-use development. Amongst the planning was the inclusion of residential units. Initial, planning permission was not granted following initial application in 1995 after a petition and objections from Whitchurch residents. The application was later accepted subject to conditions. (City of Cardiff, 1995)

4.1 Proposal

In 2009, Whitchurch gained a newly built community centre that offers a space for events like 'Little Footprints, Baby Ballet, Slimming World, Weight Watchers, Pilates, Karate and more added all the time. It is also used by Ebenezer Welsh Church.' (No date, Whitchurch Community Centre) As seen in the Google map image below. The community Centre itself is located very close to the hospital and is a direct competitor to the introduction of a new community arts centre.



Figure 7 – Google map image showing distance between Whitchurch Community Centre and Whitchurch Hospital

The new arts centre development in the Whitchurch Hospital Recreation Hall can offer something new to the community of Whitchurch that the current community centre facility cannot due to its size and facilities. Whitchurch Recreation Hall has a stage and theatre facilities that can act as a theatre home for amateur dramatics groups.

Stage Centre, a theatre company in the North of Cardiff currently perform out of The Cathedral School in Llandaff. The Recreation Hall would offer a space that would not be restricted by the constraints of the school facilities which are limited by the governance of the school.

As a centre of the Whitchurch community, community involvement in the process of developing the arts centre will be utilised. A community consultation event will be organised allowing an open floor for the community to put forward ideas and requests so that the facility will be most appropriate for Whitchurch. The community aspect of the development and use of the facility will be important in the securing of funding.

Funding

Due to the proposal not being targeted towards a private developer, the funding would come from the heritage sector. The obvious choices would be the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and CADW. To gain the funding from these heritage agencies, certain criteria will need to be met.

The available funding from CADW is limited and only given out to community buildings. Despite the proposal leaning towards a community arts centre, CADW funding is specific towards repair and conservation whereas the recreation hall will mostly require the development of facilities that will bring it up to a standard of modern community use. With the restriction being set at £50,000, this is a viable option to cover the specific maintenance of the historical fabric on further inspection.

With precedents of funding community arts centres within the Cardiff area already being set by HLF, most of the funding will be aimed at HLF. In 2015, the Ebenezer Chapel restoration project based in the centre of Cardiff received £1.2 million from the HLF to develop a conference, community and arts centre that was opened in December 2016. It will be important to illustrate the lack of funding being shown outside the centre of Cardiff in the smaller tight nit communities on the suburbs of Cardiff.



Figure 8 – Cornerstone proposal (Accessed from <https://cornerstonecardiff.org/> on 17-05-2020)

The restoration of the Ebenezer chapel is an indication of the potential of the Recreation Hall and the variety of uses for such a large open space including conferences and society meetings.

4.2 Conservation management

Restoration

Area	Significance	Proposal	Impact
Stained glass windows	The stained glass windows are part of the historic fabric of the hall and share the evidential value of the hall. There is aesthetic value in the design of	To maintain and restore any damage to the iron frame. The crown/cylinder glass appears to be in good condition.	There is low impact on the stained glass windows as their maintenance will ensure their conservation.

	the windows with the seals of England, Scotland and Cardiff adding to their historical value		
Stage and Fly tower (see figure 1 and 9)	The stage has historic value based on its alignment with the history of removing the stigma of institutionalization in asylums.	General maintenance is required on the timber stage and a health and safety assessment is vital on both the stage and fly tower.	Low impact on the stage and fly tower with general maintenance being the main solution.
Internal fabric	The ceiling and the coat of arms above the stage are part of the aesthetic value of the hall. With the barrel suspended ceiling being the most spectacular representation of the architecture of Oatley and Skinner to date is of evidential value to the whole hospital.	The ceiling and coat of arms appear to be in good condition. General maintenance and re application of paint will be utilised.	Little to no impact on the internal fabric with the focus on re-painting to maintain the aesthetic value of the hall.

	<p>The historic value of the coat of arms in terms of the identity of the hospital being a part of Cardiff itself is important to note.</p>		
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Overall, maintenance is key for the hall. This keeps the cost down as there is very little in terms of replacement of key features. Further inspection is required.



Figure 9 – Fly Tower (Authors own, 2019)

4.3 Overall building development

The focus of this proposal is the conversion of the Recreational Hall into a community arts centre space; however, it is important to show where the new space fits inside the overall development of the Whitchurch Hospital. Accessibility to the recreational hall will be focus once the plan for the overall development has been established

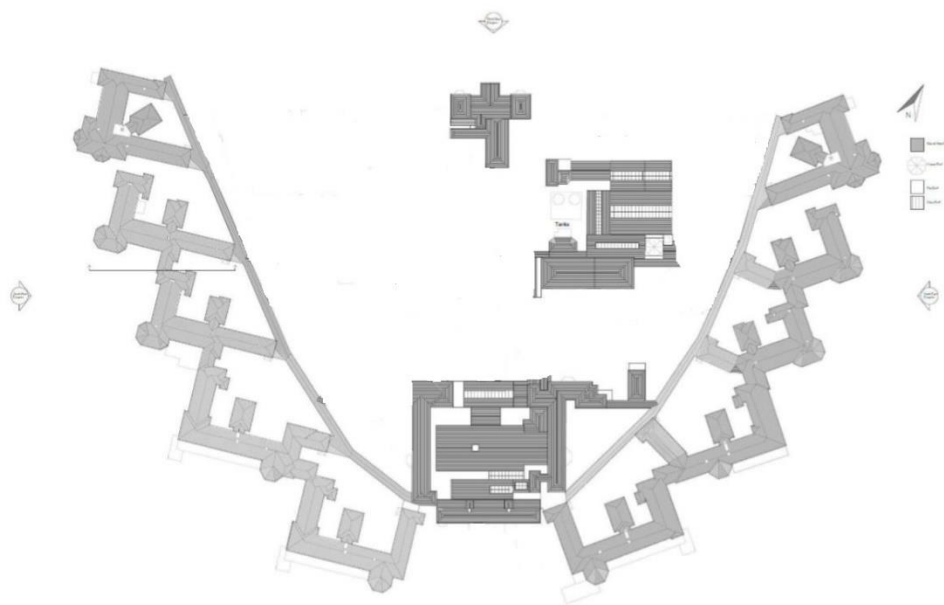


Figure 9 – Adapted from Paul Hayes map to illustrate overview of site plan for controlled demolition (Paul Hayes, 2020)

As seen in the above image, there is large scale demolition on site. With the idea of creating a more feasible restoration of the hospital. By demolishing many the sundry buildings that link the wings to the spine of the hospital, the spaces begin to open. This idea of creating space harps back to the original idea of creating open spaces as part of the treatment for the patients at the hospital and falls under the category of aesthetic value as outlined in the CADW conservation principles. With Whitchurch now being engulfed by the spreading metropolis that is Cardiff, we can see in figure 10 how much of the open space feel has been lost on the site and this is an attempt to re-create that

feeling. The incorporation of trees will be utilised with the use of photographs and plans from the construction and the first several decades of the sites use. With the lack of interest shown by potential developers, the willingness to allow managed demolition on site may encourage developers to undertake the massive overhaul of the site.



Figure 10 – Shows the large number of trees and the open space around the hospital (Accessed from <https://digimap.edina.ac.uk/> on 17-05-2020)

Retention of the entrance building as a museum to the history of the hospital will be vital in the remembrance of the hospital. The museum will highlight the lives of the staff members and patients ensuring to recognise the good work carried out at the hospital. This is designed to remove the stigma of the hospital whilst being honest about its use in the past. As seen at Glenside museum in Bristol, this is a fantastic opportunity to educate.

The wings of the hospitals will be converted into luxury apartments that can be built within the shell of the outer walls of the hospital following on from the removal of partition walls to allow for development. This development would grow the local economy by bringing in professionals within commutable distance to the centre of Cardiff via the transport links shown in figure 11.

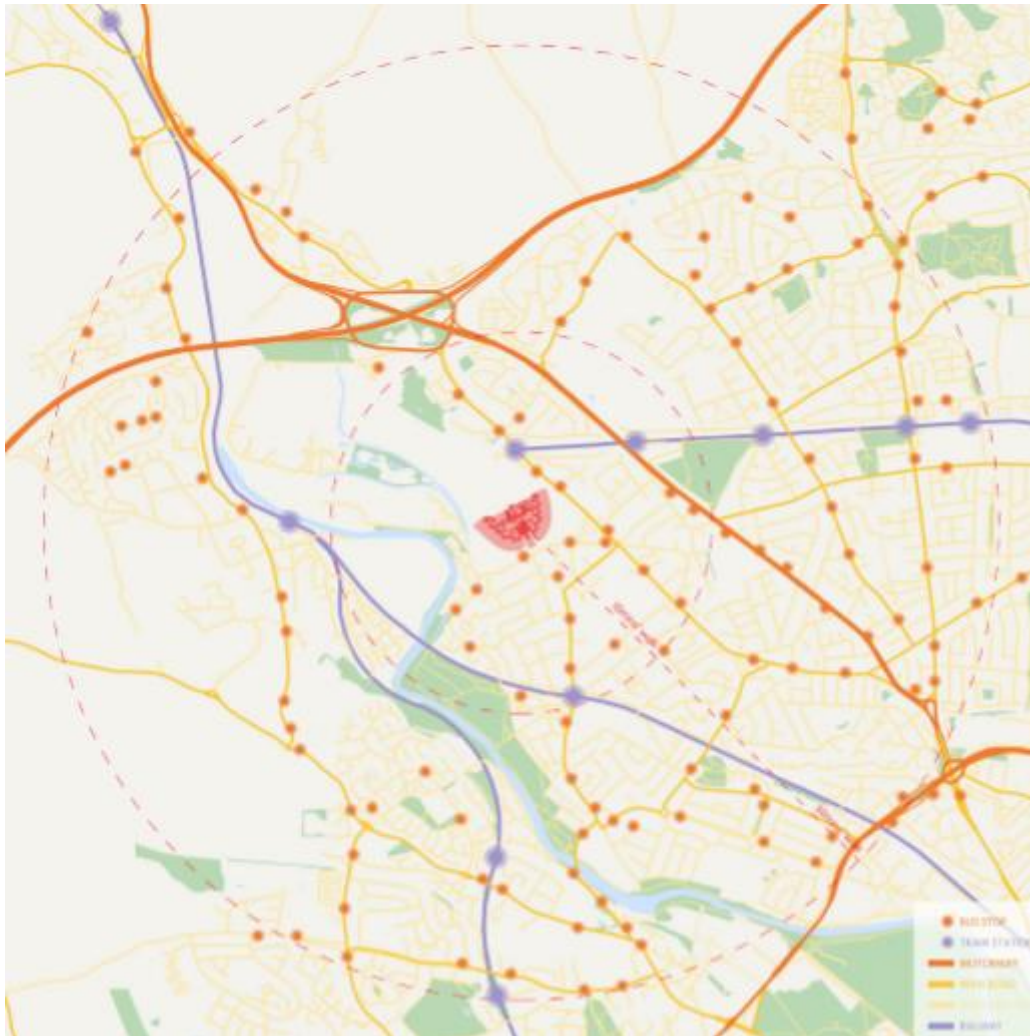


Figure 11 – A modern map indicating the present transport links (Accessed from Yunfan Zhang, 2020)

It is justifiable to carry out specific demolition and development at the Whitchurch hospital due to the demolition of most of Winwick hospital and everything but the water tower at Warlingham hospital. The retention of the iconic Whitchurch Hospital water tower, the two wards of the hospital and the Recreation Hall. With the retention of the 'echelon' (Cadw, 2002) footprint of the hospital as

seen through the two wings and the main entrance building on the North East side of the hospital, the feel of the hospital would remain.

A more detailed proposal for the remainder of the hospital would be beneficial in future or collaboration with other proposals so that the most suitable use is found in conserving the hospital and its past.

5.0 Conclusion

This report has proposed the conversion of the Whitchurch Hospital Recreation Hall into the Whitchurch Community and Art Centre specifically within the overall development of the site into residential and a museum reflecting the history of the site. It is important for community engagement when finalising the completion of this project as this will aim to be the heart of the Whitchurch community. The new centre is not going to compete with the existing Whitchurch Community Centre but offer different facilities than the existing centre so that the two sites can co-exist. Further discussion relating to the proposal for the whole site will be needed so that the site can be conserved respectfully with the above proposal for the remainder of the site allowing context for the main proposal in this report. Whitchurch Hospital is a hugely significant part of North Cardiff which has been part of the local community for over a century and must be conserved respectfully for the community surrounding it.

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