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## CRUMLIN ROAD GAOL

### Scoping Study undertaken for the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland

## REPORT

**THE PHOENIX TRUST** is the working name of the United Kingdom Historic Building Preservation Trust, which exists to rescue and regenerate large heritage buildings at risk. We act as an enabler, facilitator, fundraiser, advisor and advocate. The Trust aims for an inclusive approach with full community involvement, encouragement of public access, opportunities for training in traditional building skills and the demonstration of craftsmanship and design consistent with conserving historic fabric.

On February 28<sup>th</sup> 2003 the Trust was engaged by the OFMDFM to assist in finding a regenerative future for the Crumlin Road Gaol.

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. to undertake a Scoping study to review the work undertaken to date in respect of potential for the re-development of the Crumlin Road Goal site
2. to examine the potential and benefit of including other adjacent sites
3. to provide terms of reference for a follow up feasibility study

The review revealed the combination of the studies already undertaken covered most of the areas a feasibility study would address. At the Steering Group meeting on June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2003 Phoenix proposal to re-cast the terms of reference was agreed and 3 above modified to focus on delivery vehicles to drive the way forward.

The Report is divided into four sections

1. The Review of the Work done to Date pp 2-9
2. The Adjacent Sites and Associated Structures pp 9-12
3. The Historic Buildings pp 12-16
4. The Way Forward pp 17-20

A list of abbreviations is attached p 21

It was carried out by Jill Channer, Jennie Page and Hilary Weir for the Phoenix Trust through review of reports and other written information supplied by OFMDFM, attendance at meetings, site visits and telephone conversations and submitted on June 13<sup>th</sup> 2003.

## 1 REVIEW OF THE WORK DONE TO DATE

Four key reports were supplied to Phoenix:

1. The Capita Economic Appraisal/Options Study of the Crumlin Road Gaol Site February 2002
2. The Crum – Belfast's History and Our Future Report of a community-led conference on the future of the Crumlin Road Prison - April 2002
3. The Report of the Project Team of the North Belfast Community Action Project - May 2002
4. The North Belfast Tourist Development Strategy - March 2001

1 and 2 are site specific, 3 and 4 refer to North Belfast.

These are summarised and reviewed below:

### 1.1 SUMMARY OF CAPITA CONSULTING *Economic Appraisal / Options Study*

**Delivered:** 11 February 2002

**Commissioned by:** Department for Social Development (DSD) and Belfast Regeneration Office (BRO: one of three offices of DSD's Urban Regeneration Group)

**Funded by:** [presumably DSD and BRO]

**Objective:** To establish if there is a case for BRO to acquire the Crumlin Road Gaol site (CRG) in the context of the wider regeneration of the Crumlin Road and surrounding area

**Methodology:** Followed guidance *Appraisal and Evaluation in Central Government, 1997* (the Green Book) and Northern Ireland Preface to this.

**Structure:**

Executive Summary p i

1. Introduction & Background p 1
  2. Strategic Context p 4
  3. Assessment of Need p 13
  4. Objectives and Key Issues for Consideration p 24
  5. Identification and Review of Options p 29
  6. Assessment of Monetary Costs and Benefits p 33
  7. Assessment of Non-Monetary Costs and Benefits p 38
  8. Analysis of Risk and Uncertainty p 43
  9. Summary and Selection of Preferred Option p 45
  10. Project Financing, Management, Monitoring and Evaluation p 47
- Appendices One to Seven  
Tables One to Seven

**The report is confidential.** Phoenix does not know to whom, other than the commissioning bodies, it has been circulated.

**CHARACTER OF NORTH BELFAST** Section 1.1 (paras 2 & 3, p 1); Section 3.2 (pp 13-14)

In decline for many years; suffers some of the highest levels of poverty and

disadvantage in the city and has been deeply affected by the past 30 years of political conflict. Highly diverse and segregated; has failed to benefit fully from many initiatives aimed at economic development and urban renewal. Population movements caused by sectarian violence have produced small, highly polarized communities, which makes it difficult to attract private, public, community and voluntary input.

**STRATEGIC CONTEXT** Executive Summary (p i); Sections 2.2-2.7 ( pp 5-11)

Proposed acquisition assessed within context of regeneration strategies, policy aims and objectives of DSD, BRO, Environment & Heritage Service (EHS), North Belfast Housing Strategy, Belfast City Council, North Belfast Partnership Board, and potential end users.

**BRO** Section 2.2 (pp 5-6)

Mission statement: "To encourage an inclusive, partnership approach to regenerating Greater Belfast, tackling disadvantage and building strong communities in its most socially and economically deprived areas." BRO budget 2001-04 = c.£23m pa. BRO aims to lever additional regeneration support from e.g. IFI, EUSSP and National Lottery.

**BRO and CRG** Section 1.1 para 5 (p 1); Section 3.1, 3.3 (pp 13-15)

BRO agreed to cover Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) ongoing maintenance costs for a time-limited option to purchase CRG. Aims to achieve economically viable development scheme involving public, private, community and voluntary sectors.

**POTENTIAL END USERS** Section 2.7 (pp 11-12); Section 3.4 (pp 16-17)

**PRONI:** Needs premises that complement its ethos and achieve preservation of NI's archival heritage and public access to it. Currently attracts 18,000 visitors pa but space limits services, e.g. history and family research centres. Requires 11,000 sq metres of which 44% for storage. Has expressed interest in acquiring CRG and the Courthouse.

**Mater Hospital Trust:** Belfast's main acute hospital. Adjacent to CRG. Needs up to 600 parking spaces; currently leasing 300 from NIPS on CRG site. Has expressed interest in buying this area (for possible multi-storey car park). Also interested in locating some non-clinical services in part of Gaol (possibly D wing).

**St Malachy's College:** Bounded by Girdwood Barracks, CRG and Mater Hospital. Formerly owned land to rear of main prison now used for parking. Needs space for playing fields. No legal obligation on NIPS to sell to the College.

**STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS** Section 3.5 (pp 17-23)

General consensus BRO should acquire CRG for public sector or PPP-driven development for range of non-residential uses.

**KEY ISSUES** Section 4 (pp 24-32); Section 6 (pp 33-37); Section 10 (pp 47-52)

**Costs:** essentially met by public purse. Capital works plus ongoing sustainability. Capital investment needed c.£33 million (*NB: estimates for site clearance, demolitions, repair and redevelopment based only on experience of other sites/buildings – no survey*). **Financing:** acquisition = public sector; redevelopment: various options including Executive Programme Funds especially Social Inclusion/Community Regeneration Fund; PFI/PPP; other sources, especially if non-government vehicle used for development. **Girdwood Barracks:** emergency exit through site [*barracks may now close*]. **Grade A listed status:** how much can be demolished/alterd? **Buried remains:** implications. **Working Out Unit:** NIPS to retain unless another site offered. **Courthouse, especially tunnel:** impact of any separate development; should BRO aim to acquire it? **Roads service:** traffic implications; public transport. **Area's perceived negative image.** **Timescale:** piecemeal versus concurrent development.

**OPTIONS** Section 5 (pp 29-32); Section 9 (pp 45-46)

1. Do nothing
2. **BRO to acquire.** Preferred option after SWOT, financial and risk analysis, weighting. Responsibility for redevelopment should not rest solely with BRO.

**APPENDICES:** Appendix 6 = a 28page HBC Consultation report by the EHS which includes a full listing evaluation, extremely useful historical and documentary analysis, summary of historic importance of all the structures on the site with detailed descriptions and a list of inappropriate later alterations and additions which are of no historic importance.

## 1.2 SUMMARY OF THE CRUM- BELFAST'S HISTORY AND OUR FUTURE - Report of a Community-led Conference on the Future of the Crumlin Road Prison, April 2002

**Delivered:** April 2002

**Commissioned by:** The North Belfast Tourism Group

**Funded by:** the Northern Ireland VT and Community Relations Council

**Supported by:** The Tourism Advisory Group

**Objectives:** The collective exploration of a vision of the CRG for the next 150 years of its life involving community groups and specialist interests

**Methodology:** A keynote speech followed by 4 Workshops

**Structure:**

1. Introduction pp 3-4
  2. Keynote address by Jim Arnold , manager of New Lanark Mills, South Lanarkshire, Scotland pp 5-6
  3. Workshop findings pp 7-16
  4. Summary of workshop findings pp 17-18
  5. Next steps p 19
- Appendix A: Action Plan  
 Appendix B: Conference Participants  
 Appendix C: Publicity and Media coverage  
 Appendix D: The North Belfast Tourism Project Advisory Group

This report has an exuberant and direct quality. It speaks with a diversity of voices

and provides access to the community's concerns in the widest sense. All aspects of the present and potential perceptions of the CRG appear to have been incorporated and the next steps provide a positive boost to its future.

The workshop findings are summarised under 6 headings;

1. *"The community have to be real stakeholders and be part of every stage of development"* involvement and active participation of the community vital to the CRG's future. Funding a permanent development worker (as at New Lanark), set up a Trust to secure funding and oversee development or build on the John Thompson Community Planning exercise.
2. *"The need to create jobs was taken as given"* Economic regeneration and job creation for the area high on all lists of priorities.
3. *"Preserve one wing of the Gaol"* consensus view of potential as visitor attraction – preservation of at least one wing intact to display: the history of Belfast; local/oral history resource; Charles Lanyon Museum; Museum of Citizenship; Rogues' Gallery; Horror Attraction.
4. *"Imagine back-packers from around the world sleeping in the Crumlin Road Gaol Hostel"* a tourist attraction/facility – family genealogy services if PRONI relocates to CRG/CRC – cafes/restaurants/bars/specialist retail.
5. *"Lets make it a vibrant, living, sustainable space"* mixed use developments proposed including –music venue, rehearsal and recording facilities, educational facility, youth space, performance/exhibition/artists' production space and enterprise/business units.
6. *"Not a white elephant but a visionary project for Belfast"* potential gain for NB and the city, awareness of the complexity of the development issues, recognition that economic viability crucial. Generally accepted that mixed-use development might be the best option and public/private sector partnership suggested. Concern that physical (tunnel), access and use links with CRC should not be lost.

The Next Steps (Section 5 pp 19-20) emphasise

- *involving* the community at the earliest stage to address a series of ownership, access and output questions
- *creating* mechanisms to ensure solutions are achieved through public/private sector/community partnerships
- *winning* funding through this partnership approach

The Appendix A Action Plan proposes

- wide circulation of the conference report
- follow-up meetings with relevant partners
- applications for funding study visits, developing community involvement and an integrated Area Plan
- examination of the potential of the Gaol Museum proposal
- a look at the potential for arts events and projects to involve the community
- seeking access to the CRG for historical tours- once the ownership issue is resolved

### 1.3 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT OF THE PROJECT TEAM OF THE NORTH BELFAST COMMUNITY ACTION PROJECT *focusing on the CRUMLIN ROAD JAIL*

**Delivered:** May 2002 (commenced December 2001)

**Commissioned by:** The First Minister, Deputy First Minister and the Minister for Social Development.

**Contribution from:** The North Belfast Members of the Legislative Assembly nominated Advisory Forum

**Funded by:** The OFMDFM and DSD.

**Objectives:** to put in place a plan of short medium and long-term actions to address social and community issues in North Belfast to produce early outcomes and practical assistance to local communities.

**Methodology:** consultations with the public, police, community groups, the private sector, elected representatives and Ministers, public and private meetings, school and church events, presentations, written submissions, commissioned research, regular meetings of the Advisory Forum and "actions already taken on the ground".

**Structure:**

Executive Summary pp 9-15

Part 1. Analysis of the issues pp 17-57: 1. introduction; 2. socio-economic profile; 3. territoriality; 4. sectarianism and interfaces; 5. political leadership; 6. community capacity in NB; 7. youth; 8. health issues.

Part 2. Summary of Analysis pp 59-63

Part 3 Action initiated by the project pp 65- 67

Part 4 Recommended further action pp 69-97: 1. dedicated high-level unit for NB; 2. community capacity building; 3. a new development site for NB 4. centre for citizenship; 5. health; 6. education; 7. new approaches.

Appendices p 99: A .public meetings report; B. list of consultations; C. example of community development through E-technology.

This report is essential reading for any consideration of the future of CRG. It offers unique and objective "insight into the particular social and community problems currently being experienced in NB". It provides a benchmark against which the consequences of regenerating the CRG can be measured.

The Phoenix Trust is not briefed on the implementation of the report's recommendations. They offer both signposts and real opportunities for the regeneration of the CRG as a community catalyst and regeneration reconciler.

The Recommended Further Actions set out in the Executive summary (pp 14-5) and amplified in Part 4, all include actions, transformations and aspirations which either could involve, or already do involve the CRG. They are *with commentary in italics*:

- a) The establishment of a dedicated senior level unit to build community capacity, develop a long-term strategy for NB, encourage partnerships and take responsibility for addressing issues in interface areas
- b) The creation of a Community Capacity Building programme resourced to enable community groups to access assistance to meet their needs
- c) To make available £3million additional funding per year for (ideally) 5 years under a new concept of Community Empowerment Partnerships to involve and service smaller community groups within the partnership

*All of the above provide an actual or potential forum for integrating and involving the community in finding a future for the CRG. The CRG could provide any one of these recommended groups with a home until the long-term solution is achieved.*

- d) To encourage Government to develop a major site involving mixed usage to serve as a symbol of hope and economic regeneration for NB

*What could be more suitable to serve this purpose than the CRG?*

- e) To develop a Centre for Citizenship

*This could be housed in the CRG as part of its educative and reconciliation role.*

*PRONI have*

- f) The acceptance of the North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust bid for almost £11million of Executive Programme Funds to invest in two new health and well-being centres for NB and the redevelopment of an existing site

*There are several historic buildings on the site which could be considered as a potential health and well-being centre including the former hospital building.*

- g) To make additional resources available to schools in NB to boost links between school and home, enable the Belfast and North Eastern Education and Library Boards to review the level of support for voluntary youth organisations, extend the Department of Education's youth work in schools initiative and participate in the Department's pilot scheme for ages 14-16.
- h) Develop e-technology to create an environment for homes in NB to communicate in a non-confrontational manner via the internet
- i) To aim for NB to become a Music Action Zone within which a new school for percussion could be established as a catalyst for cross-community contact.

*The above may offer an opportunity for part/temporary occupation of the CRG.*

#### **1.4 SUMMARY OF THE NORTH BELFAST TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY - SYNOPSIS focussing on the CRUMLIN ROAD JAIL**

**Delivered:** March 2001 (commenced late 1999)

**Commissioned by:** The Ashton Community Trust (community-led organisation based in NB) established the NB Tourism Project as a cross-community initiative to support economic regeneration within NB, to assist in the creation of employment and enterprise opportunities for local residents.

**Endorsed by:** The North Belfast Partnership

**Funded by:** The Northern Ireland Tourist Board and the Belfast Regeneration Office.

**Objectives:** to assess the tourism potential of NB to develop a 5-year expansion plan.

**Methodology:** consultation with the community, local businesses, schools, B&B providers, government and statutory agencies. Questionnaires, open workshops, one-to-one consultations.

##### **Structure:**

1. Introduction-background-methodology
2. Study of NB –people-history-culture
3. Context for tourism development-macro/micro
4. Basis for tourism and growth in NB
5. Analysis of strategic research
6. Strategy aims and values
7. Thematic analysis-marketing-communication-accommodation-activities-attractions-training-employment-facilities

8. Delivery structures with ballpark figure
9. Action Plan

The copy supplied to Phoenix is incomplete. It lacks appendices and the lists of consultees and source materials.

This is a useful study that presents a number of scenarios in which the CRG is seen as a positive asset.

2.05 Gaol and Courthouse listed among 6 prominent buildings of architectural and historical importance currently disused or under-utilized which delineate the character of NB and "offer the opportunity for their imaginative re-use for tourism or leisure activities".

2.08 Links the Crum with the Courthouse in developing tours as part of a structure of a year-round programme of activities and events.

5.05 Workshop findings included re-development of sites of interest (e.g. the Courthouse).

The SWOT Analysis (strengths & weaknesses) lists as strengths NB's political history, its diversity - NB long associated with different traditions including Jewish and Asian- its proximity to city centre, airports, ferries and as tourism starts at "such a low base" there is great opportunity for development. Its weaknesses include its heartlessness, no commercial centre, eating or shopping venues, neglect by government agencies, physical appearance, lack of information and local knowledge, signposting, off-putting gateways. The Crum and Courthouse are both listed as "prime for re-use". Political tourism is seen as an important link into East and West Belfast community initiatives.

7.05 Lists the development of local tours/trails (coach, taxi, cycle and walking) and includes the Crum and Courthouse among 7 proposed themes and urges lobbying for productive re-use to contribute to the local tourism product. "To work with the community and other agencies to create a vision for a new flagship for NB in an historic building" (with allocated costs of £81,000).

9.6 Funding uncertainties cited for Peace II, Urban II.

9.7 Core funding and sponsorship available from Belfast European Partnership Board, the Northern Bank, Laganside.

#### **SOME STATISTICS**

1.5 million people visited Belfast in 1999 generating £114 million and supporting 12,000 jobs  
1.1 million day-trippers spent £26 million  
79% were from NI  
9% from RI  
7% from "Britain"  
23% visited to see major attractions - zoo-museums-City Hall.

39% of overnight visitors come to visit friends or relatives  
 16% participate in specific activities  
 11% come because of an "historic interest"  
 Only 3% of Dublin's overseas visitors visit NI  
 59% of respondents identified lack of accommodation within NB. The total number of rooms available in hotels and B&Bs in NB was not known at the time of the research but it is asserted that there is not enough to sustain tourism. 4.08 mentions the University of Ulster is planning to develop the Art College campus at York Street, which could make high-quality student accommodation available for seasonal tourism.

Comments included "the main focus should be political tourism, this is what overseas visitors are interested in".

31% believed that a clean up of main routes would benefit the area  
 "North Belfast is characterised by a large number small communities, often divided by community interfaces. The main arterial routes in NB are generally in a state of decline, with much dereliction and visual blight. NB is detached from the main city centre by un-welcoming road and rail networks and buildings which do not relate to the NB area" (Making Belfast Work, Environmental Audit 1996)

Also mentioned are :

The North Belfast Housing strategy  
 The Crumlin Road Area Plan  
 North Belfast Traders Association  
 Making Belfast Work  
 Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau  
 Belfast City Council's Visitor Signage Strategy  
 Belfast city council's Tourism Development Strategy 1995-2000

## **2 THE ADJACENT SITES AND ASSOCIATED STRUCTURES**

### **2.1 Review of the reports and discussions identify five adjacent sites.**

There is a confused cacophony of aspirations expressed by the representatives of the owners of these sites which requires calming and clarification. Because of the logistics and timing factor, the current information presents a "Rubik cube" of complexity. This situation is highly volatile, and should be stabilised.

In order to understand how the resolution of one site/owner's aspirations could impact on all their neighbours' and the CRG itself, this process must be managed. Each should be asked to

1. Establish the boundaries of their landholding
2. Identify all covenants, conditions, access agreements, reversions, leases, public rights of way, statutory undertakers and services that affect their landholdings and those of their immediate neighbours
3. Set out their pitch for an extension of their holdings into neighbouring sites including the CRG
4. This should include information on how their "bid" fits in with their

business/forward/corporate/5-year plan or similar and an assessment of what their proposals offer the community

5. It should contain a spaceplan requirement and specify the compliance with statutory and building regulations for their intended use(s)
6. The processes that the organisation has to complete in both governance and legal terms to be in a position to undertake the proposed project
7. How the funding is to be obtained and when
8. Produce a consolidated and robustly realistic programme for the delivery of their "bid"

Reciprocally, the issues concerning both the physical access to the CRG and the terms of occupation must be agreed and communicated to all parties at the outset. This avoids aspirational creep. The Departmental Solicitor should be instructed to review and clarify the ownership, access, statutory undertakers, covenants, reversions, emergency access routes for the army etc of the CRG.

There are two main issues that require a decision:

1. Will the listed wall be permitted to be breached – if so where and how?
2. What will the vehicle be for the management of both the CRG and public domain and on what terms will sub tenants be allowed to occupy part of the site?

## 2.2 THE CRUMLIN ROAD COURTHOUSE

This was closed in June 1998 and was purchased by Cobra Estates, (owned by Barry Gilligan) in 2001, three years after it was acquired for a nominal £1 by a local firm as a "surplus property" under the Private Finance Initiative. Since 1998 the building and the site have remained derelict and the condition of the Grade B+ listed building has deteriorated dramatically. There have been continual breaches of the security perimeter and serious damage is being wreaked by both fire and theft.

It is understood that discussions are currently in progress between Cobra, the BRO and the Planning Department over an application to demolish the rear of the building and construct a 5-storey office block with parking on the site. This will be bolted onto the 1850 listed building and one of the courtrooms will be retained for restoration and presentation. Level 1 of the entrance hall is described as a reception/exhibition area, with the floor above also designated for reception/exhibition. Barry Gilligan has indicated his willingness to collaborate with the eventual owner/users of CRG in re-linking the two sites as a visitor attraction. He has also made a number of approaches to potential purchasers/developers and Building Preservation Trusts to sound them out on assistance. Cobra is also seeking grants for all aspects of his scheme. In April 2003 it was reported that there may be the prospect of Government support through an Urban Development Grant and this was to be the subject of a draft joint ministerial submission from OFMDFM/DSD. Phoenix has not had access to the Cobra business plan but press reports refer to £8million refurbishment costs.

Currently there is a To Let sign prominently displayed on the Crumlin road elevation. We recommend that

- The grant position should be formally clarified.
- The application for the demolition and development should be determined.
- If consent is refused, or the developer is unable to fund the project and is unwilling to negotiate or sell, the statutory process should be initiated to

enforce a repairs notice, followed if necessary, by a Compulsory Purchase Order.

- If the owner continues to have problems financing the repair and development of the CRC, he could consider a number of partnership vehicles, donating the site to a building preservation trust or returning it to the Government.

The critical mass of the re-united CRC and CRG would offer a multiplicity of flexible uses for BOTH buildings because they present a completely complementary and contrasted repertoire of historic spaces.

### **2.3 THE MATER HOSPITAL**

It is understood that the Mater hospital has at various times expressed a desire to colonise part of the CRG for their administrative offices, storage of records and the provision of conference facilities and meeting rooms. All these are apparently linked to the retention and possible expansion of their car park. The car park is leased from NIPS and currently provides 300 spaces when their requirement is double this amount. What currently happens to the additional demand? The terms of the lease from NIPS should be disclosed. It would certainly be possible to re-design the present allocated space to provide more parking – the layout appears very relaxed. Could the car park be re-located, expanded onto the Girdwood site (which appears to be largely covered with tarmac)? We are told the Hospital have considered building an additional multi-storey car park. This should be established in their “bid”. Some of their proposals apparently assume that the CRG listed perimeter wall will be breached to provide direct access to their contiguous property. It is important to establish the ground rules for access to the CRG by potential users so that there can be a basis for negotiations to take place. The Phoenix Trust is particularly concerned that the historic entity of the listed wall and jail is not adversely compromised or damaged by short-term solutions, which impede the long-term sustainable future of the whole site.

### **2.4 ST MALACHY'S COLLEGE**

Their main concern has been consistently identified as the adequate provision of sports facilities on their restricted site. They apparently originally owned the land NIPS now lease to the Mater for this purpose. The legal basis for this transaction should be discovered. Was this compulsorily acquired from them? Is there a reversion clause? Were they compensated? Were they consulted on the offer of the lease to the Mater? These issues and any other should be bottomed out in the context of their “bid”.

### **2.5 GIRDWOOD BARRACKS**

In November 2001, the Defence Estates of Scotland and Northern Ireland confirmed to Capita that the Army's current planning assumptions required the Girdwood Barracks as an Army base for the next 5-10 years and that consequently they would continue to need the emergency exit through Belfast Prison. The emergency exit requirements need to be fully understood and clearly stated. If a new use is found for CRG during this pre-decommissioning period an alternative route will have to be agreed.

Recent developments on the political front have indicated the prospect of an earlier decommissioning of this property. In the event that this takes place, any impediments

likely to delay the release and offer of this site to provide for the needs of neighbours should be investigated and eliminated now. Apparently this land was requisitioned at some stage from a private owner. Title and terms need to be discovered to identify constraints. There should be a clear and agreed use for the site, which can be implemented on the basis of a sharp timetable. Delays will cause further dereliction and decay and add to the burden of the "empty quarter" aspect of North Belfast. This site is an enormous asset. Its immediate re-integration into the community after decades of sterilisation and secrecy will be a positive and practical objective with considerable symbolic significance. It must be planned for. It could offer the solutions to both the St Malachy playing field and the Mater car parking. It could provide a location for a wide variety of different functions for the community – including the recommended actions set out in the North Belfast Community Action Project Report.

## **2.6 THE WORKING OUT UNIT**

The present location of this unit is critically important to the future of the CRG because it controls the one access point to the site that can be easily used by contractors. It is understood that negotiations are in progress to obtain access agreements and also to link to and improve access to the public road system. The long-term plans for the continual occupation of this site by NIPS appears to be dynamic. They should be reviewed in the light of the emerging timetable for the commencement of works on site. Ideally, by the time the CRG's future is being resolved plans should be well advanced for the removal of this working-out facility to a more appropriate location.

## **2.7 THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND (PRONI)**

PRONI is consistently put forward as an ideal potential "anchor tenant" for the CRG. As a neutral organisation curating the history of all the Province's communities, its relocation to this iconic building - which itself has captured so much of the history of the Province is especially appealing. It is widely known that PRONI is looking for new premises. Their needs are cogently argued in their Corporate Plan 2003 -2006 and Business Plan 2003/4. They have the full support of DCAL, their sponsoring department. Their visionary Director is currently fully engaged in the process. This positive and neutral use of the CRG could attract massive local, national and international support and finance as a focus of reconciliation and regeneration. However, the requirements of the PRONI have never been quantified in terms of a space audit. We do not know what level of security they need for the multiplicity of different kinds of records they hold. Above all, the different materials will need different environmental controls and we do not know how much of these will need to meet BS5454. Until we have this information, the PRONI's requirements cannot be properly tested against the space and conditions the CRG can offer. We recommend that PRONI be invited to "bid" for the CRG so that their "wish list" can be evaluated against what the buildings on the site can offer. In this process it would also be essential for steps 4-8 set out in paragraph 2.1 above to be followed.

## **3 THE HISTORIC BUILDINGS**

**3.1** The Phoenix Trust exists to rescue and regenerate large historic buildings and its expertise is particularly focussed on achieving this for the CRG. We therefore offer

the following site-specific advice:

1. There is -surprisingly- no detailed current information on the COSTS or the PROCESSES required to free the historic buildings from the accretions of unwanted structures and put them in a good state of repair.
2. There is no information of how much it will cost to keep the buildings in a good state of repair on an annual basis.
3. It is clearly going to take some time to resolve the future of the buildings and the site. The buildings have continued to deteriorate since decommissioning took place seven years ago. They do not present an accessible or attractive prospect to any potential users.
4. The responsible action would be to stop the rot immediately. Repair of the envelope can be achieved without prejudice to future uses.
5. This will ensure no further costs are incurred during the "waiting period" while the short and long-term uses of the buildings are determined.
6. It will also allow for interim community uses and access to be introduced to the building and permit the possibility of potential uses that could generate an upkeep income.

#### 7. A QUICK WIN

**It will also get some action on the site and flag up the intention to transform the Crum to community use.**

8. To start the process, the following should be commissioned immediately:
  - a) **Condition Survey** to form the basis of the following specifications:
  - b) **The remediation and rehabilitation of the site** inclusive of  
**the removal of all the unwanted attached and freestanding structures we** *understand the removal of asbestos is currently being considered*
  - c) **The reinstatement and repair of the scars** of the removed structures as they affect the historic buildings
  - d) **The repair of the historic buildings**
  - e) **The recovery, reinstatement and reconstruction of the original symmetrical design of the Main Gate**

The Phoenix Trust can produce the brief for tendering and managing the commission in collaboration with your experts in the Historic Monuments and Buildings team of the Environment and Heritage Service.

### 3.2 TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

The demolition of unwanted structures, the remediation of the site and the restoration/repair of the retained buildings offer an ideal opportunity for **community involvement and provision of training in traditional building skills.**

- The Historic Monuments and Buildings Direct Labour team could facilitate the latter. The historic buildings are sufficiently robust to sustain supervised on-site training in pointing, roofing, etc.
- The demolition work could also afford the opportunity to provide a controlled environment for young offenders to undertake community service or the long-

term unemployed to gain work experience.

- There is also the opportunity for volunteers to contribute on a similar basis to the successful "Conservation Camps" used by Cathedrals and the National Trust.

### 3.3 PROCUREMENT

This needs to be handled expertly to ensure that training and work experience opportunities are fully integrated into the contracts and acceptable to the Health and Safety Executive. They themselves could consider using this project to train their staff so that the experience acquired can usefully be applied to other projects. The following precepts should guide the process:

- The tendering procedure must be exemplary and fully compliant with all the regulations.
- It should commence with the appointment of a flexible and tenacious Project Management team to guide the process. They must work collaboratively with representatives of both the immediate and wider community (Phoenix can facilitate this appointment).
- The team must be committed to understanding that "value for money" in this project means maximising LOCAL training and community involvement.
- There are also many elements of this project that cannot be quantified in financial terms alone but what they contribute as part of a wider concept of "adding value". We should investigate ways of capturing this.
- One of the challenges for the Project Management team will be to package the work in such a way that as much of the work as possible can be placed with suitably experienced LOCAL contractors - rather than with all the usual suspects.
- None of the Northern Ireland trade - or craft - organisations representing the skills involved for this project holds geographical databases.
- The research and search for appropriate candidates could be offered as a learning experience project to a group of local education establishments.
- This will assist in setting up an "offer hierarchy" for invitations to tender focussed initially on North Belfast and radiating outwards to encompass the whole City and beyond.

### 3.4 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

It is clearly essential to build in maximum involvement of the local and wider community at every stage of implementation. Each element should be interrogated to ensure that every opportunity is taken to offer involvement at an appropriate level. All that is proposed and programmed should be communicated to the community with complete accessibility and transparency. Nothing that is being proposed is negative, confidential or difficult to convey.

- Before work starts a web site could be set up, and updated regularly, explaining what is being proposed and when
- This could be linked to a wide variety of sites to ensure maximum visibility
- Print-outs of the home page could be distributed as leaflets in the locality
- Milestones can be publicised and press releases posted on the site
- The site could have a bulletin board and be a regular discussion arena
- There should be a presence on the site from the outset to provide historic and

contemporary information – this could initially be in a site hut and then relocate to one of the accessible historic buildings as soon as conserved space is available

- Volunteers could be trained and engaged to show visitors and school parties round during the course of the works
- Special events, open and access days for special needs groups could be arranged
- As soon as appropriate conserved space is available it could be offered to local community groups to colonise and introduce a friendly presence on the site
- Space should be allocated for hire for parties, celebrations, conferences, exhibitions etc
- Funding could be won for a wide spectrum of exhibitions covering everything from the history of the buildings, international links with coeval panopticon prisons, the people, the legal processes, the impact on the community, perceptions of the prison, building conservation crafts and skills, art images, competitions and concepts for the future of the Crum and the surrounding area, consultations etc
- Grant could be sought for schools or community groups to make videos of visits and progress with “hands on” access to these
- Funding could be found for the commencement of an oral history project recording people’s reminiscences and experiences of the Crum as well as visitors’ impressions
- As soon as scaffolding goes up the whole scaffold cover facing Crumlin Road should be used as an information site advertising the OFMDFM initiative and community events
- It could also be used to promulgate positive information on the project – or space could be sold for advertising to generate income

### 3.5 FINANCE-GRANTS-FUNDING VEHICLE

- a) The OFMDFM has an unusual catalytic role in winning solutions to multi-departmental challenges. In that capacity it is empowered to focus finance and resources to achieve identified objectives. This process needs to provide an audit trail.
- b) Services provided by specialists located in different Departments of Government can be identified, located and activated. Recharging for the provision of expertise can be negotiated.
- c) There needs to be a co-ordinated control matrix established to capture all costs incurred by the project from the outset.
- d) This could be retrospective as it is clear from the documentation provided to Phoenix that a considerable sum has already been expended and invested in finding a future for the Crum.
- e) There are rules imposed by the European Union concerning the percentage of grants from the public purse permitted for specific projects.
- f) The Capita Report (p.47 Section 10) identifies a number of potential sources for funding, which need to be updated and finessed to focus initially on the recovery and repair of the historic structures. Phoenix can assist this process.
- g) Consideration will be required of the appropriate vehicle to win the maximum amount of funding for the recovery and repair of the historic buildings.
- h) This could be an existing Trust, a dedicated trust established for the purpose, a

not-for-profit organisation or company.

- i) For rapid resolution of the physical state of the buildings and immediate action the Crum could be retained in Government ownership until a decision is taken on a future vehicle.
- j) Once the buildings are repaired and rehabilitated consideration can then be given to passing them to an appropriate vehicle to deliver the interim and/or long-term future of the whole site.

### 3.6 STATUTORY CONSTRAINTS

- a) Phoenix's investigations have revealed a most interesting anomaly concerning the status of the Crum.
- b) The highest grade of listing was awarded in 1988. A detailed assessment was subsequently carried out as a "Second Survey Database" submitted as an Historic Buildings Consultation Report in June 1999.
- c) The 1988 listing map is ambivalent and does not show all the historic structures identified in the 1999 survey. Clarification is currently awaited from EHS.
- d) Phoenix enquired whether Crown Exemption applied to the site - which remains in Government ownership - the question was referred to the EHS legal advisors.
- e) Their initial advice is that the buildings are Crown Exempt.
- f) However, apparently Article 113, paragraph 4 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 - which exempts Crown and government owned buildings from planning controls - ALSO appears to exempt them from listing. The EHS legal advisors are currently clarifying this issue. It has wide implications for the government and Crown Estate in the Province.
- g) Whatever the outcome of these deliberations, involving the professional input of the EHS from the outset with the repair and reinstatement of the historic buildings will ensure that as long as the buildings remain in government ownership, the department responsible is acting entirely properly.
- h) The 1999 HBC report clearly sets out the buildings on the site which are not considered of historic importance. It also (page 28) sets out a list of recommendations for the removal of inappropriate alterations and reinstatement of lost features for all the historic buildings. This list should be incorporated in the brief for the commissioning of the condition survey.
- i) There are no archaeological implications of any of the repair/refurbishment or demolition proposals.
- j) None of the curtilage buildings selected for removal are of sufficient historic interest to merit inclusion in the listing schedule by the present criteria.
- k) The Royal Commission on Historic Monuments has a statutory duty to record buildings at risk. We are awaiting confirmation on the level of recording undertaken at decommissioning. All the buildings on the site should be recorded as part of the process of undertaking the condition survey.
- l) We understand that there is currently a far-reaching, catalytic review of the planning and infrastructure challenges for North Belfast being undertaken on the initiative of the OFMDFM and in collaboration with North Belfast Community Action Group and Belfast Regeneration. The transformation of the historic buildings and environment of the Crum combined with the associated access opportunities could be a pioneering project for integration into the planning review.

## 4 THE WAY FORWARD

### 4.1 RESOURCES

The present arrangements for considering and carrying forward the future of CRG are recognised as inappropriate to carry through the whole project, whatever the end solution for the building. There are two dilemmas: how and when to increase resources, in particular, dedicated professional skills, and which legal and financial structures are most appropriate for delivering the eventually determined end use.

**Increasing resources** without a fully determined end use, and without a decision on the delivery mechanism, comes hard to the public sector, but in this case it is **an essential practical step on the path towards creating a deliverable project**. It will also signal to the wider population the political commitment to early progress. Given the political, community, economic and project-related problems of CRG, in our view it is necessary to increase the human resource dedicated to this project immediately, and to create a transitional organisational structure capable of getting the project to the point of delivery (at which point long term structures can be put in place). The report makes suggestions as to how this might be achieved, subject to finance.

### 4.2 CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS

The present arrangements for considering and carrying forward the future of CRG were established following the announcement in May 2002 of the intention to transfer the site from the UK government to the OFMDFM. A Steering Group of officials from the OFMDFM and the Department for Social Development was established to oversee the redevelopment of the site and provide the forum for communication and decisions - taking into account the wishes of Ministers. This Group is chaired by Edgar Jardine, Director of Economic Policy and Public Service at the OFMDFM, with John McGrath, Deputy Secretary Director of the Urban Regeneration and Community Development Group of the DSD as Deputy Chair. Core membership is drawn from OFMDFM, DSD, the Belfast Regeneration Office and the North Belfast Community Action Project. Specialist input is drawn in from whichever departments of government are identified to assist the process: the Departmental Solicitor's Office, the Construction Service, Environmental Heritage Services, the Department of Health, NIPS, the Department of Education and any other department as appropriate. Potential future members of this group are the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure DCAL and PRONI. At present, the sole reporting line to Ministers is through the Chairman. The day-to-day resource is provided by John Ross in OFMDFM, and at present the work on CRG represents a very small percentage of his time.

### 4.3 IMMEDIATE FUTURE NEEDS

This level of resource has been appropriate to date but is insufficient to drive forward the work that needs to be done now, in the following categories:

*Creation of a master plan for future stages of the project* (the preparation of a concise document suitable for submission to Ministers, supported by a detailed critical path to which all parties are committed to work). Within that structure, the following are key components.

*Review of relevant international comparators* (e.g. review use of certain iconic

redundant gaols in Europe, America, Australia and South Africa)

***Development of costed proposals for future use*** (within a methodology that allows for comparisons between alternative uses and for various combinations of use that might emerge in the course of the project's development). This may, for example, involve detailed working with DCAL and PRONI to determine the feasibility of the latter becoming the anchor tenant

***Plan for achieving political and financial support for the preferred use*** (this will include the necessary work to seek out and prepare for applications to EU and international funding sources, as well as the necessary Government investment appraisal and funding processes)

***Selection of long-term delivery mechanism for chosen outcome*** (in the light of the choice of option and the likely funding sources)

***Development of the community involvement programme*** (to ensure that early buy-in to the processes as well as the end objective is achieved, and to set the project in the appropriate long term context)

***Creation of risk management systems suited to the project*** (a comprehensive review of the risks to a successful outcome cannot wait until the end user is legally committed and a physical delivery structure is in place, as current risks exist and need managing through appropriate systems)

***Management of the preparation of the site for new use*** (the demolition of redundant unlisted structures and external repair of the buildings to be retained, with the agreement of the statutory authorities, need to be set within the context of the overall plan and of the overall management arrangements).

#### 4.4 WORKING LEVEL REQUIREMENTS

These tasks, at least in the next 10 – 12 months, need to be tackled in parallel, and this will place overwhelming demands on available resources, particularly as no one involved in the project to date has experience of large and/or complex projects in the public or private sector. It is probable that one experienced individual, with the necessary clerical/secretarial backup, and sufficient budget to provide access to consultant support for e.g. the production of a critical path, could take the project through the next 12 months. This person needs to be the project driver, recognised as such by all parties, with clear reporting lines to [?Edgar] and to Ministers. It is unlikely that the ideal person will already be employed by OFMDFM. Any new employment would probably have to be on a short term basis until the future legal structure issue has been resolved (see below); this does not always attract the best candidate, especially if there is any question of relocation. A private sector project manager will have the professional skills but probably not the public sector skills needed. One source does, however exist that can provide skilled professionals with experience of public sector projects, and that is Laganside. **We recommend that OFMDFM explores quickly the possibility of a 12-month secondment from Laganside as a cost effective way of acquiring a project driver.**

#### 4.5 SUPERVISORY REQUIREMENTS

There is the ever-present possibility that under-resourcing, or attention failure, anywhere in the system can hold up the whole project and frustrate the plan. In addition, therefore, to dedicated resources reporting to the lead organisation, a structure that ties in political and senior support in all involved departments and other organisations is necessary. At this strategic level, the project will need a project champion, who is provided by the project driver with all necessary information in good order and good time. The project champion will be responsible for ensuring that his/her colleagues in the public sector are properly engaged, undertaking any necessary high level approaches to potential funding sources or private sector users and for briefing Ministers throughout on performance against their agreed policies. This role is not full time, but does demand a commitment to the project that will ensure that, when difficulties arise, time will be available to perform these functions.

The project champion will probably choose to work through and with a committee system to involve the necessary public sector interests. The Steering Group should be reconstituted as the main strategic body with attendance at consistently high level from partner organisations. Terms of reference Sub groups, led by the project driver, can tackle detailed issues at working level and report to the main group. Ideally, all Ministers involved will also meet at regular (say 3 or 6 monthly) intervals to receive presentations on progress and determine any top-level strategy issues (and, if at all possible to use the occasion for PR for the project).

#### 4.6 LONGER-TERM STRUCTURES

In our experience, major projects are best not run from within Government departments. Here are some reasons.

- The emphasis on delivery is more urgent in projects.
- The skills required tend not to be found among career civil servants.
- Even within project delivery organisations in the public sector, the availability of experience of large projects is limited.
- If possible, end-users should contribute to the design and delivery of any such project: this is difficult to achieve between Government departments (whereas sole bodies with their own governance have clear identity and responsibility)
- If there is any possibility of a public/private partnership, separate mechanisms are essential
- Some potential funding sources are not available to Government departments
- A certain distancing of the project from Ministers (and senior civil servants) can assist in protecting them from backlash if the project hits difficulties.

The choice of a structure now would be premature, but obvious candidates for consideration are:

1. A new URC for CRG and any other local sites that may be released for redevelopment in the immediate future
2. The existing Laganside URC – the remit of this URC is now more than 50% achieved and resources are believed to exist within Laganside that would allow CRG to benefit from the strengths of a pre-existing and successful regeneration agency, subject to agreement to extend the remit geographically [and in time?]

3. A Government owned company (which can be created without statute)
4. A free standing charitable structure limited by guarantee in receipt of substantial public support (such a structure could be the most appropriate if, for example, the Crum became or housed a Centre for Reconciliation, as it would provide evidence of impartiality and independence).

As noted above, **we recommend that future work on these alternatives forms part of the remit of the project driver.**

#### **4.7 ROLE FOR THE PHOENIX TRUST**

While PT is a charitable organisation, the individuals associated with it have substantial experience of the public sector as former civil servants and employees and secondees of Government quangos (there is also significant charitable and private sector experience). The Chairman of the Trust has also wide ranging experience in relevant areas. Phoenix would therefore be able to assist OFMDFM in several ways, if requested. For example Phoenix could

- Research international comparisons
- Draft the job description and assist in selection of the project driver
- Act as mentor/advisor to the project driver and/or project champion
- Produce (with specialist sub contractor assistance) or criticise any produced critical path
- Assist in steering group meetings, presentations to Ministers
- Assist in preparation of fund raising initiatives
- Provide evidence of successful community involvement in major building projects
- Assist in the process of achieving the remediation of the site and the repair of the envelope of the historic buildings
- Undertake a risk assessment at the beginning and at fixed points in the development of the project
- Undertake an independent assessment of the preferred option and the impact on the historic building

In addition, the Trust's patron and President, HRH The Prince of Wales, is a passionate believer in the cause of the regeneration of historic buildings and the CRG in particular. He will continue to express his enthusiasm and to develop the role of CRG as an example of what can be achieved with the precious resource of heritage buildings.

**List of Abbreviations**

BRO	Belfast Regeneration Office
CCH	Crumlin Court House
CRG	Crumlin Road Gaol
DCAL	Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure
DSD	Department of Social Development
EHS	Environment & Heritage Service
HBC	Historic Buildings Council
NB	North Belfast
NI	Northern Ireland
NIPS	Northern Ireland Prison Service
OFMDFM	Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
PFI	Public Finance Initiative
PPP	Public/Private Partnerships
PRONI	Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
RI	Republic of Ireland
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TOR	Terms of Reference
VT	