

Site: Mapping Potential Territories

By Millie Jones

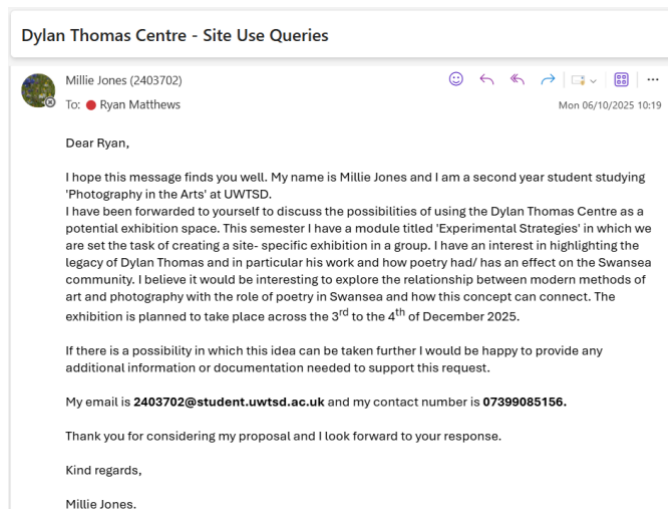


Site:

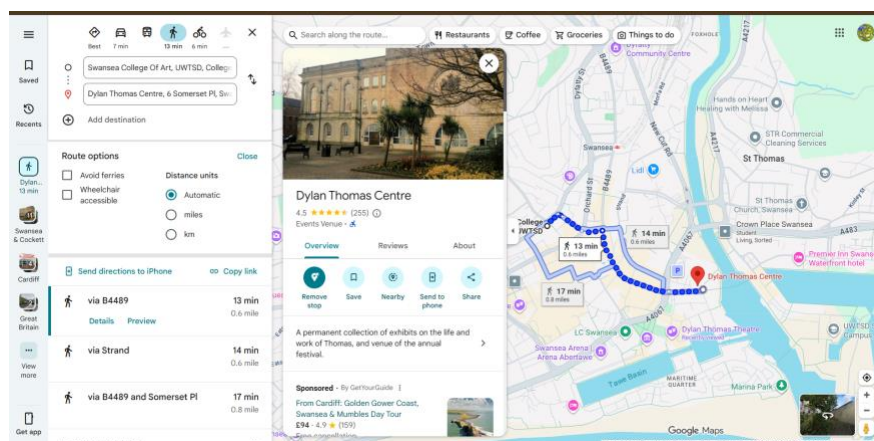
The site that I am proposing to use as an exhibition space for the site-specific project is the **Dylan Thomas Centre**. I have always been interested in exploring the significance of Dylan Thomas and his work in relation to Swansea. In particular his legacy, how this affects the community and heritage of Swansea and Wales. Furthermore/ alternatively to 'just' Dylan Thomas, I think it would be interesting in a group dynamic to potentially explore how poetry can be used to reflect the community from the past to present.

In terms of the space being accessible, I am aware that an aspect of the building is occupied by the student hwb of the University itself.

I contacted the telephone number that is listed on the Dylan Thomas Centre website who referred me to the 'switchboard' in the University who are in contact with the Dylan Thomas Centre about the logistics/ feasibility of using the space for potential use. After this phone call, I was then told to email **Ryan Matthews** who is Head of Facilities at the University to explain my proposal further.



(Email response/ conversations from email above have been discussed in person with Ryan Moule)



The Dylan Thomas Centre is located at Somerset Place, Swansea, SA1 1RR, Wales, United Kingdom. The site is around a fifteen-minute walk from the Dynevor Campus, with permit holders parking (used by myself), pay and display parking and the site is surrounded by clear waking paths.

My commute to university consists of me waking past the building every day. I feel that not many people are aware of what the building is used for so potentially displaying work on the building outside itself would be an interesting concept. Exploring how poetry and his legacy effects the community in a space that already highlights the history of Dylan Thomas, I feel would make the work 'site-specific'. By presenting work in the group exhibition in a different way from the displays about Dylan Thomas's life inside the building, I feel it would be interesting to explore the relationship between modern methods of art and photography, the historical artefacts within the exhibition, and the role of poetry connecting to Swansea.

Research:

The information below is taken from the Dylan Thomas Centre's website history page:

<http://www.dylanthomas.com/>

"Starting its life as the town's Guildhall in 1829, the Old Guildhall (as it is known) looked quite different to today. Built by Thomas Bowen, between 1825-1829, from designs by architect John Collingwood, the building originally had sweeping grand staircases either side of the main entrance and the building housed court rooms and smaller offices."

"The building functioned as the Guildhall until 1934 when the decision was taken to build an entirely new civic centre (which includes the Brangwyn Hall) near Sandfields and St Helen's cricket ground."

"Today the centre continues to operate as home to the literature and arts programme for the city, with a busy and thriving calendar of events. It also houses the only permanent exhibition on Dylan Thomas."

The Dylan Thomas Centre – Building Timeline

- 1825 – 1829 Work begins to build Swansea's Guildhall in the Martime Quarter
- 1848 The Guildhall officially opens
- 1907 Building of a new Guildhall considered but not proceeded with
- 1914 Birth of Dylan Thomas
- 1919 Guildhall is the venue for victory marches by returning regiments
- 1928 Guildhall deemed too small. Decision taken to build a new one
- 1930-2 Construction of Juvenile Employment Centre as an annex
- 1934 Guildhall ceases to be the centre of local government in Swansea, but continues as Juvenile Employment Centre. The current Guildhall opens
- 1939 Old Guildhall commandeered for naval purposes
- 1939 Junior Instruction Centre for Boys
- 1948 Centenary of the Old Guildhall
- 1949 Old Guildhall houses the Secondary Technical School (Co-educational)
- 1953 Death of Dylan Thomas
- 1954 Technical School becomes a 'boys only' school
- 1947-1960 Secondary Technical School Youth Employment Bureau
- 1960 Boys' Technical School Closed. Replaced by Technical College
- 1970 Technical College moves to Tycoc'h. Old Guildhall becomes an annexe for Dynevor Comprehensive
- 1960-1971 College of Further Education
- 1982 Dynevor annexe closes. Building is uninhabited
- 1993 Swansea is chosen to host the UK Year of Literature and Writing in 1995 and the building is refurbished

1995 Year of Literature – Tŷ Lliên / The Dylan Thomas Centre opened by former US President Jimmy Carter. A year round programme of events continues beyond the Year of Literature and a permanent Dylan Thomas Exhibition is developed

1998 First Dylan Thomas Festival. It's now an annual event, held between Dylan's birthday, 27 October, and the date of his death, 9 November

2001 New Dylan Thomas Exhibition opens at the Centre. Visitors from all over the world come to Swansea: over 70 different countries are represented in the Visitor Books

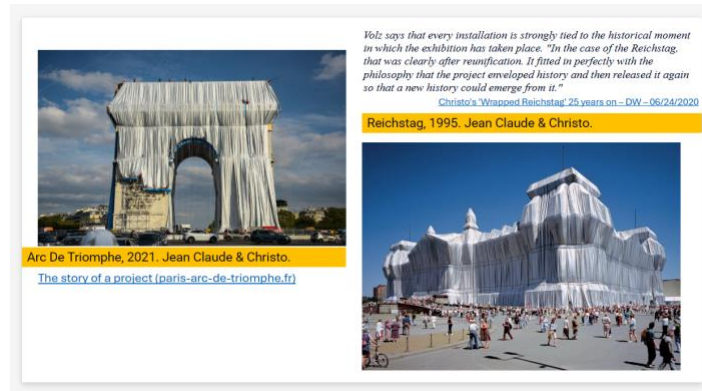
2013 Year round programme of arts events continues. Those who have appeared at the Dylan Thomas Centre in recent years include Carol Ann Duffy, Sir George Martin, Rowan Williams, Alexei Sayle, Don Paterson, Gillian Clarke, Owen Sheers, Russell T Davies, Simon Armitage, Brian Turner and Cerys Matthews

2014 The Dylan Thomas Centre is the hub for the year's Dylan Thomas Centenary Celebrations

I planned to visit the exhibition itself for further research when taking photographs for this proposal, yet due to the time constraints for handing this proposal in coinciding with the days and times the exhibition in the Dylan Thomas Centre is open I have been unable to visit to add that research information to this document but I plan I still plan to visit when opened at a later date.



When taking images of the site for this proposal, I went inside the building, and the image above shows where the exhibition permanently is when opened yet was closed when I visited.



After being shown the works of Jean Claude & Christo in the introduction session of Visual Enquiry 1, I keep thinking about the concept of these buildings being covered by draping fabric. I keep imagining having the Dylan Thomas Centre partially covered in some sort of fabric material that displays poetry or imagery that connects and explores the relationship between Dylan Thomas, his work of poetry and the connection and significance in Swansea.

Suggested 'theme/ context':

This project for the site-specific exhibition could explore the continuing influence of Dylan Thomas on Swansea, its people, and its cultural identity, using poetry as both inspiration and creative practice. His writing potentially offers a way to connect history with the present, capturing the character of Swansea while reflecting a broader sense of Welsh heritage. The project could encourage a group to respond to Thomas's legacy through modern creative methods such as art and photography, alongside the rhythm and imagery of poetry. This approach could provide opportunities to reflect community voices while reimagining the city's cultural identity. By doing so, the work could highlight how heritage and memory continue to shape Swansea, showing how Thomas's influence remains alive in both the artistic imagination and the everyday life of the community.

Images of the site chosen:

Main entrance,
overall shot
of building.



Detail
of
building.



= side of the building.

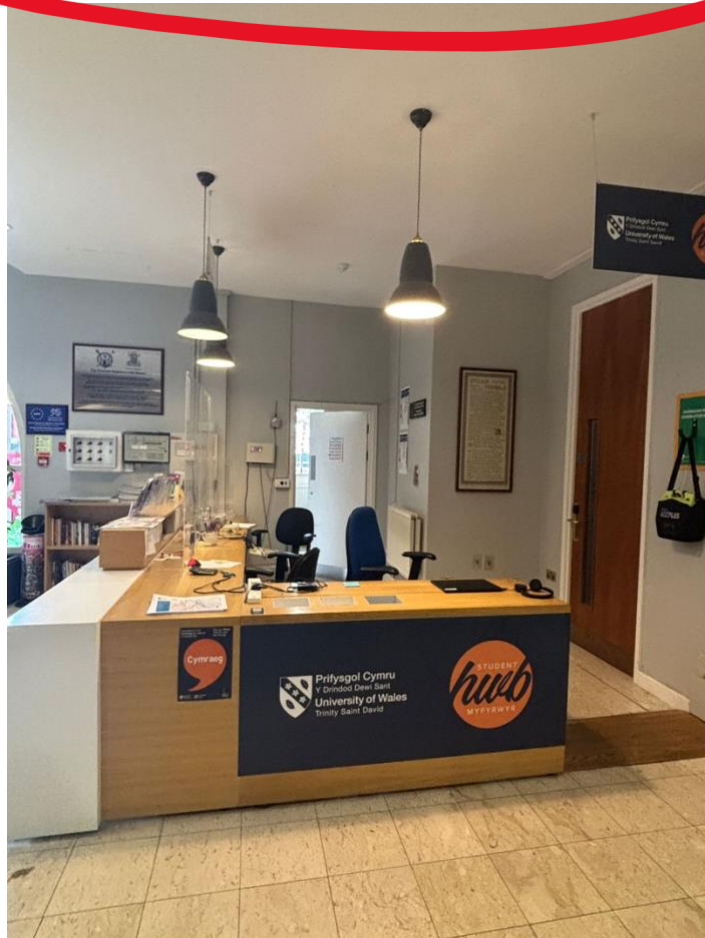


Fences - could be interesting to incorporate?



(→ Significance of exterior crest?

→ Window space, projection, light,
accessible to showcase work?



→ Student hub base inside building.
↳ Facilities were closed at time
of my site visit.

ALTERNATIVE SITE IDEA – UNABLE TO USE

When thinking of site ideas for my proposal, I had the idea of using a theatre stage as an exhibition space as poetry can be quite performative. In particular if the work as part of the site-specific exhibition was to incorporate in some form the work of Dylan Thomas and his influence on Swansea, I felt that this location would be interesting to explore that connection. I first checked on the theatre's website to see if anything would be on at the time of the exhibition and during the week of the group exhibition, unfortunately a pantomime is already planned to take place in the theatre space.

I had a telephone conversation with a lady who works in the ticket office at the theatre, and she felt that depending on what type of work would be shown on site of the theatre, the possibilities of having an exhibition at the set dates planned, the logistics would not be possible. However, I then visited the theatre in person and the same lady who I spoke to on the phone kindly showed me around the main foyer of the theatre and explained as to why the space would feel overwhelming if work was to be held around the time of the pantomime was on. Due to school trips and large crowds attending to watch the show, her main concern was if any work created and displayed by a group could be potentially ruined/ damaged.

She was more than happy to accommodate for requests for any potential exhibitions in the future. We also discussed the possibilities of using the exterior wall space, yet the building is council owned and with the buildings being surrounded with murals, the idea of that would be unlikely.

I felt passionate when thinking of this idea and even though it is unable to happen, I wanted to share my thoughts and ideas with you both for potential future use.

