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Visual Enquiry 1

Porthcawl harbour is a historic landmark, that has been recently revived in reputation mainly because there have been many photographers taking images of the storms across the harbour wall and lighthouse. The Jennings buildings are well known in the area amongst locals as a historic landmark and have recently been refurbished. These buildings have been part of the landscape for hundreds of years and have been used for many commercial uses and more recently both commercial and residential. The buildings are currently occupied by three commercial businesses, Coffi Co, Harbour Kitchen & Bar and Double Zero with private rental flats and offices above.

The building was first built in 1832, in red brick and mortar and is a rectangle block that is on the precipice of the harbour wall. It is now known to be one of the last remaining dockside warehouses from it's era in South Wales region. It was initially used as the south terminus for the Dyffryn Llynfi Porthcawl horse-drawn tram road transporting coal and iron to and from the Llynfi valley. It wasn't until 1911 the building was named The Jennings when the building was taken over by timber importers Jennings & Co. before later a change of use as an indoor skate park after being left by the previous owners to decay and derelict and a black mark on the local landscape. As part of the wider harbour regeneration this building was modernised inside and sympathetic restoration outside which has helped maintain the history and heritage but allowed a change of use and for locals to enjoy.

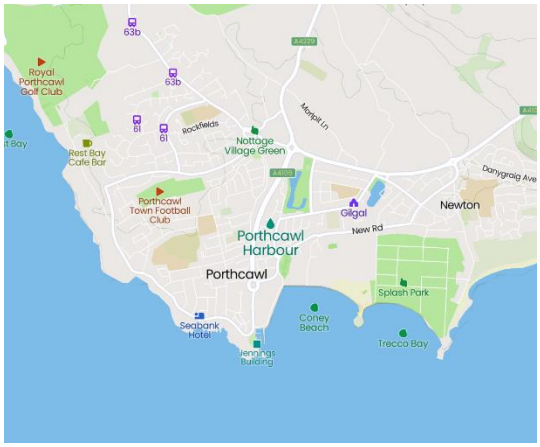
A key local photographer who has documented the history of Porthcawl is Francis Firth, Firth has created a digital history of the buildings. He has captured the building in its glory and also its derelict state, he also captures in his books the full history of the building over its lifetime. His work predominately focuses on entire harbour and sea front area. His style and outcomes are meticulous in detail and reflect the area at the time of creation of images. As part of this research piece I researched local history books, local photographers and local magazine exerts to concrete my thoughts on which location I wanted to reference in my work. On the wall of one of the local businesses that utilises The Jennings is a historic ariel map of the coastline, I would have loved to have taken an image of this however due to local restrictions this building is currently closed to the public. For reference pieces I looked at ordinance survey maps, local ariel maps and historic images to inspire how I wanted to capture my outcomes.

The concept of the project pieces that I want to produce are inspired by Firth, the intent is to showcase the modernised building and surrounding area, focussing on the small sympathetic lean to the original area, documenting the history of the place. As an example, there is a small sample of tram line that can still be found on the pier which shows the roots of the design and challenges you to explore the history of the area and buildings. I intend to depict that however much you change the interior and slight changes to the exterior of a building you cannot take away the soul of the building and its history and that sympathetic restoration, you will always be able to relate to the original building and landscape and feel its journey across time. For this piece of work, I used a digital SLR with images taken in their RAW format. I wanted to rely on the natural light and to clearly create images of the area in its natural environment and form without manipulation so that it reflects the area at this point in its history. I do not intend for the images to take away from its own beauty and transform it into a picturesque image as this isn't a true reflection of the area. Therefore I will not be experimenting with editing tools such as lightroom or

photoshop to add in more vivid colours and effects, however for some of these images I added the filter to change the colour to black and white to add atmosphere and give the appearance of age to the images.
Again, due to restrictions on travel and ability to produce these images using multi media, once things return to normal I would like to enhance this collection to include black and white film photography and to explore exposure techniques in the dark room to create surreal results, for example Alexandra's work explores chemical reaction times and adding texture to the paper by adding developer with a paint brush to add layers and effects, also bending negatives in the reel to create flowing hallucinogenic effects. Overall I am happy with the topic, location that I chose to research and document and the images are as I intended. My next challenge is to explore other photographic methods and techniques to enhance this portfolio.

Porthcawl Harbour Circa 1880

Waverly Porthcawl Harbour circa 1909



Porthcawl Harbour – Current

Ariel view – Porthcawl seafront

Word Count – 832

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