



Fresh plans to turn church into a climbing centre

THE future of a Carmarthen church could take a change of direction with fresh plans for it to be transformed into a climbing centre.

A Pembrokeshire based firm has set up a crowd funding bid to raise £30,000 to turn the church into an climbing venue.

It is one of a few potential venues in town being considered by Overhang Tenby climbing centre who want to expand into Carmarthen.

St David's Church in Picton/Terrace was bought by north Wales based property developer Aaron Hill in 2011 for just £1.

Over the past six years he has spent considerably to make the building safe again - after a storm damaged its roof, 14 years ago - with a view to turning into a home.

The new plans for a climbing centre come weeks after a planning application was resubmitted to Carmarthenshire Council only last month by Mr Hill seeking a change of use from a church into a private home.

However, the ambitious climbing centre plans would see walls as high as

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14 metres inside the listed building.

Behind the project is the family run Overhang Tenby climbing centre run by John and Helena Williams.

The scheme would also include a bouldering room and a rope area.

Posting on their crowd-funding page, Mr and Mrs Williams said they want to expand and view Carmarthen as a great opportunity between popular climbing areas of Pembrokeshire and Gower.

They said: "We've been searching for somewhere to build another bigger climbing centre for over a year and we finally found our next big project (in Carmarthen).

"We are looking to convert a disused church dating back to 1837 that fell into disrepair when the church was closed in 2003 and part of the roof collapsed, leaving it open to the elements.

"The damage has since been repaired, but it will require a lot of TLC to turn



it into a fantastic indoor climbing centre complete with rope climbing, bouldering room, training area and kids climbing."

Adding: "We will continue to provide a great little climbing facility in Tenby, but the old church in Carmarthen will help us to provide a much bigger training facility.

"We also want to host local and regional climbing competitions and be a great place for the community to get together, keep fit and have fun."

Turning to the crowd-funding and how the public can help make the centre a reality, organisers said: "We can turn a beautiful but dis-used church into a fantastic new climbing facility for the community. We aim to open the new wall at the start of 2018 and we need £30,000 to achieve this."

Along with the crowd-funding page, a dedicated Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts have all been set up in support of the project.