

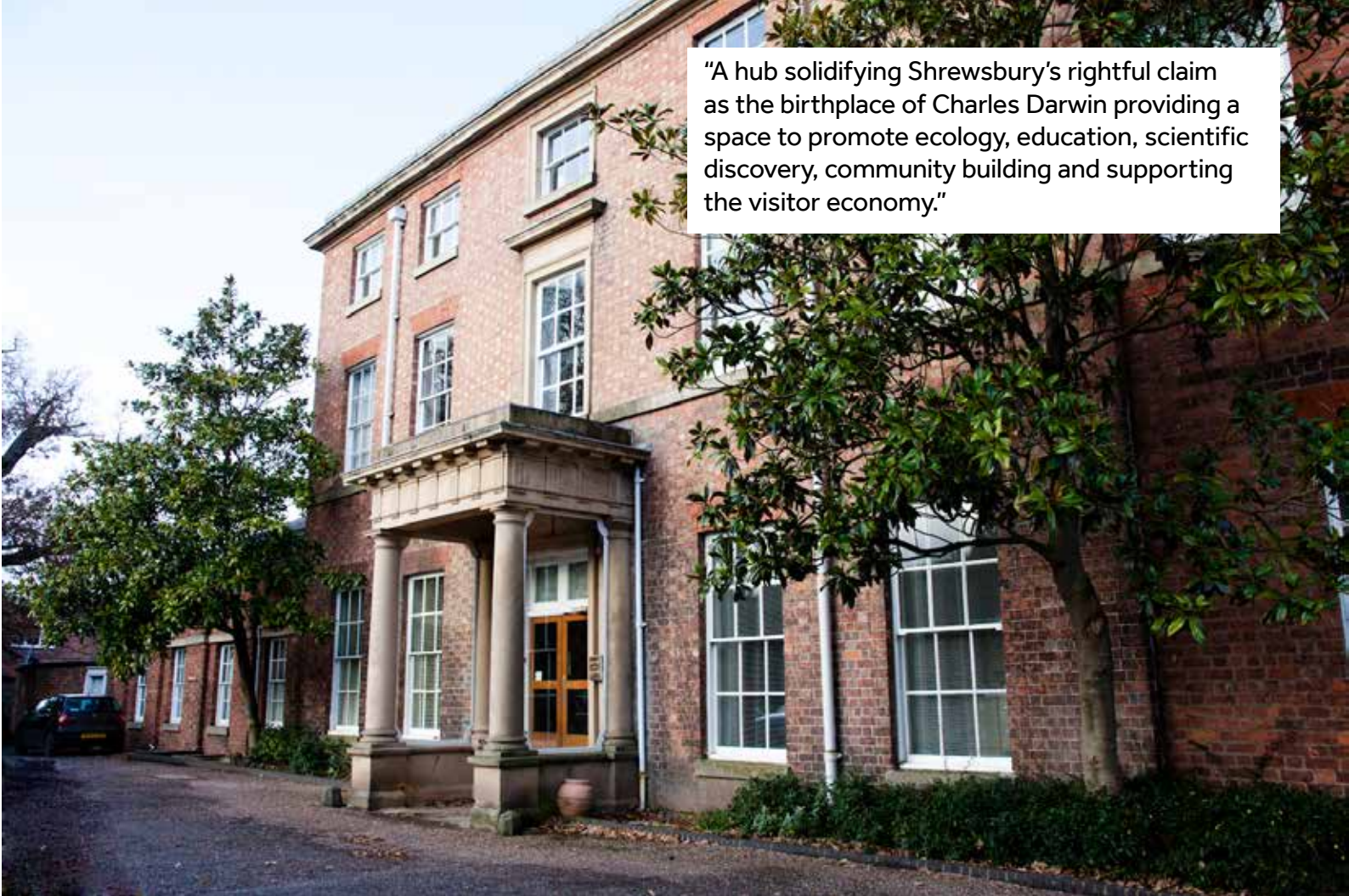
THE MOUNT VISION

Charles Darwin's Birthplace



DARWIN
SHREWSBURY

"A hub solidifying Shrewsbury's rightful claim as the birthplace of Charles Darwin providing a space to promote ecology, education, scientific discovery, community building and supporting the visitor economy."



The Rightful Claim

Mount House in Shrewsbury has a unique significance for British and World History as the birthplace and childhood home of Charles Darwin. He lived there until the age of 27 and it was the place where his young mind was shaped to think independently and creatively. This site of global heritage is currently used as an office building, despite its international significance both culturally and scientifically.

The Right Time

The time is urgently coming when the government, that has occupied the building for over 100 years, will be vacating the site. Shrewsbury Town Council has taken the lead in establishing a steering group in order to bring Mount House back into public ownership. This iconic building which represents Shrewsbury's claim to historic and scientific significance, deserves to become an international visitor destination and heritage site.

The Right Partnership

The steering group brings together a range of stakeholders, who are working in partnership to achieve a wider Darwin in Shrewsbury Strategy. Our expertise includes the fields of research, the environment, business, academia, tourism, heritage and community engagement. This is augmented by strong support from other organisations interested in celebrating Darwin's legacy, and with local government support at a Unitary level. This partnership already delivers an all-inclusive annual Darwin Shrewsbury Festival. This celebrates Charles Darwin's legacy of curiosity, compassion and independent thinking and his unique relevance to the town of Shrewsbury.





OUTLINE PROJECT OBJECTIVES FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT OF MOUNT HOUSE

- Raise the regional, national and international profile of this historic complex, creating a physical hub to link all other Darwin related assets in Shrewsbury.
- Renovate Mount House where necessary and design an economically viable, sustainable centre that creates a vibrant area to be enjoyed by visitors, workers and residents.
- Ensure public access to, and understanding of, this unique complex

and its global significance, throughout the process – including the important contribution made by the wider Darwin family in the development of the town of Shrewsbury itself.

- Promote the site as the primary visitor destination in Shrewsbury, raising the town's national profile as the region's key economic and tourism hub. It is timely that the historic iron framed Flaxmill at Ditherington, where annual visitor numbers are expected to exceed 100,000, will be developed in parallel with Mount House.

- Leave a legacy through necessary interventions to existing historic structures, that all parties involved can be proud of as well as delivering exemplary, high quality architectural design for any elements of new-build on the site to maintain it's heritage.

- Establish a Friends of Mount House group to enable full community engagement in the project

OUTPUTS

The regeneration of the site will deliver the following:

- Increase in tourism from people interested in the heritage of Darwin.
- Distinctive mixed-use development in line with the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan Vision.
- Benefit to local educational establishments as the prominence of Charles Darwin connection attracts students.

- Contribute to University Centre Shrewsbury establishing itself as an anchor institution and attract academic talent to Shrewsbury as a University town.

- Potential site for a Life Sciences course run by University Centre Shrewsbury.

- Dynamic inter-active experience for every child in Shropshire/Marches/ West Midlands region, drawing on the Charles Darwin's legacy to promote environmental sustainability including

a possible centre for Ecological Education.

- Partnership working with the Friends of Darwin, local community, educational institutions, Darwin enthusiasts and others from around the world through the broader themes of compassion and harmony evident in Darwin's work.

- Partnership work with other national institutions resulting in the wider story of the Darwin family and the industrial revolution being researched and told.

