



DESIGN
COMMISSION
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Design Review Report

Maelfa Care-Ready Living

DCFW Ref: N202

Meeting of 11th July 2019



Review Status

Meeting date
Issue date
Scheme location
Scheme description
Scheme reference number
Planning status

Public

11th July 2019
23rd July 2019
Cardiff
Residential
N202
Pre-application

Declarations of Interest

Panel members, observers and other relevant parties are required to declare *in advance* any interests they may have in relation to the Design Review Agenda items. Any such declarations are recorded here and in DCFW's central records.

None declared.

Consultations to Date

This is the first review of the proposals for this site although the masterplan for the Maelfa Centre was by DCFW in 2007.

The Proposals

The proposal is for the development of a five-storey development of 41 one- and two-bedroom flats on the site of the now demolished police station in Llanedeyrn. The development will also include communal facilities including a community room with roof-top garden.

Main Points

This is a good location for the proposed development and the aspiration of the proposals are supported, however they are not yet fully realised in the design. The proposals are well progressed, but the following points should be considered in the remaining design period.

Surrounding context

The scale of development seems appropriate for the location but needs to be shown in a wider context to be properly tested.

More detail on the destinations and routes around the building would be helpful to understand the access and movement patterns of residents.

The potential of introducing rain gardens in the verges around the building could help to provide a buffer from the street but how these will be realised and maintained has not yet been worked through. They will require retaining walls that are not yet shown on the drawings. The impact of this in terms of appearance and access to the building need to be articulated.

Elevational Treatment

As currently presented, the building appears from the exterior rather stark. More could be done to provide some life to the building façade. The grey material chosen to face the lower part of the building seems particularly sombre and could perhaps be reconsidered along with exploring the introduction of colour within the recessed balconies as discussed in the review.

Entrances

The main entrance could be expressed and celebrated more through a review of the steps leading up to it, the surrounding landscape, the extent of the canopy and the potential for windows to better overlook the space. Both the main and secondary entrances should be legible for residents and visitors and feel welcoming. Introducing colour in this and other areas could lift the building and provide the opportunity to add further interest and potentially personalisation.

Communal spaces

Introducing communal areas to help promote interaction between residents and provide an easily accessible space for people get out of their flats to is a positive aspiration. The proposed activity space, potentially open to the entrance area, is welcomed. However, in other areas the proposals suggest rather limited space, particularly on the upper floors and in external spaces.

Circulation spaces

The circulation spaces are intended to be communal spaces where people can meet and dwell, but this is not coming through clearly in the design. The more generous corridors and windows onto these spaces are helpful but the opportunity to see people across the corridor is inhibited by the stairs, lifts and storage spaces in the centre. The seating spaces on each floor were not shown on all the plans and need to be properly designed if they are to be attractive spaces to dwell in. Further analysis of the cited precedents and comparison with the current proposals would help to refine the design of these spaces.

Similarly, the covered connection between the two buildings needs further work to ensure it is a positive space. Consideration should be given to what will happen in this space such as places to sit.

Car park

All opportunities for reducing the number of parking spaces and improving the quality of this external space should be explored. An electric car sharing club could be one way of reducing numbers and freeing people from needing their own car.

Roof garden

The shared garden is a positive addition but space here is limited and needs to be used wisely particularly if it is to be shared by residents of the existing tower block and proposed accommodation. The landscape design must be sympathetic to the needs of elderly residents including feeling safe and comfortable. Consideration should be given to opportunities or other spaces such as on the roof of the main building.

Balconies

The balconies are positive additions to the flats that will provide an important private amenity space for residents and allow for personalisation. The detail of the precedent

balcony spaces should be interpreted and adjusted as necessary in the design for this building.

Accessibility

It would benefit the proposals to seek design advice at this stage from an access consultant on the broad range of elements that should be considered for current residents needs and to ensure the development is future-proofed to allow people to stay in their homes as long as possible.

Environmental Strategy

The energy strategy should be considered now so that it can be well integrated into the design. The potential for overheating should be tested as well as the impact of shading from the existing tower block.

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A Welsh language copy of this report is available upon request.

Attendees

Design Team:	Tanya Simeonova, ASL
Local Planning Authority:	David Davies, Cardiff Council Osian Ahir, Cardiff Council
Agent/Client/Developer:	David Jaques, Cardiff Council Joseph Thomas, Cardiff Council
Design Review Panel:	
Chair	Jonathan Vernon Smith
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Panel	Steve Smith Jamie Yeoman Mike Gwyther-Jones Helen Kane Jen Heal, DCFW