



DESIGN  
COMMISSION  
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# Design Workshop

Central Square & BBC Wales  
Headquarters Building,  
Cardiff

**DCFW Ref: 36**

Meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> July 2014



## Declarations of Interest

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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.

### Review Status

Meeting date

Issue date

Scheme location

Scheme description

Scheme reference number

Planning status

### CONFIDENTIAL (Pre-Application)

15<sup>th</sup> July 2014

25<sup>th</sup> July 2014

Central Square, Cardiff

Masterplan and BBC building

36

Pre-application

## Declarations of Interest

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None declared.

## Consultations to Date

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The developer and design team are meeting regularly with the Local Authority to develop the masterplan. An earlier workshop with the Design Commission for Wales was held at DCFW on 3rd February 2014. This report should be read alongside DCFW's report from the first workshop, for purposes of continuity.

## The Proposals

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The Central Square masterplan aims to develop a vibrant, people centred mixed-use development and civic space for the citizens of Cardiff and visitors to the capital city. The scheme aims to respond to the needs of commuters and citizens as well as the requirement to manage large numbers of people during Millennium Stadium events.

Management of the city's public transport networks is a key issue for this masterplan, as the site incorporates the current bus station, and is adjacent to the Grade II Listed Cardiff Central rail station. As well as public realm, the masterplan incorporates buildings for retail, offices, residential and tourist information, with a prominent BBC headquarters building planned for the centre of the development.

## Key Considerations

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The following considerations summarise key issues from the workshop, and should be used to inform preparatory work, ahead of the next meeting, scheduled to take place in Cardiff at DCFW on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2014.

**Analysis:** The results of traffic and pedestrian flow analyses are fundamental to and will inform decisions about transport strategies and street design. The results of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and responses to its findings will also inform the masterplan design. At the next meeting, the Commission will expect to understand clearly how this analysis is informing design decisions, particularly those affecting pedestrian movement and connections.

**Transport strategies:** A transport strategy will need to incorporate rail, bus, taxis, parking, park and ride, potential metro links, and the interfaces between them.

**Bus Station:** The decision about the location for the bus station will have an impact on other transport and urban design strategies and the overall masterplan. The station entrance and how it ultimately addresses the streets around it will be important, especially at vehicle and pedestrian entrances/exits.

**Rail Station:** Different options have been considered by Network Rail for the operation and layout of the train station itself, including provision of 'over-the-top' access to platforms or better ground or below ground connections. It is understood that a below ground option which joins two existing tunnels is currently preferred. The Design Commission would encourage Network Rail to engage with the Design Review and workshop process for this crucial city centre project.

**Network Rail:** Options are being considered which provide an operational facility for Network Rail which has the potential to add significant value and to open up opportunities for taxi rank provision.

**Taxis:** We understand taxi companies are to be consulted on options for the provision of taxi ranks and their operation. A decision will need to be made with tangible input from Cardiff City Council and Network Rail. Taxi services will need to be managed in the long term and should ideally be able to operate normally on event days.

**Parking:** The Council and Network Rail will need to manage parking and vehicle arrangements around the train station. Parking will need to be planned as part of a city-wide (or wider) strategy that balances the management of vehicles in the city centre with commercial interests, tenant/occupier needs and wider pedestrian use of a high quality public realm. Park and ride will need to form a part of this planning.

Access to basement car parking for the BBC and adjacent buildings is yet to be resolved. The relationship to, and impact on, public spaces and streetscape will be an important consideration and commitment.

**Wood Street:** This is an important street in the scheme. The street is of significant width and there is flexibility as to how it may be used to accommodate or promote different modes of movement. A positive role for the street should be defined, which

includes building use and landscape. There is an opportunity for this street to become an exemplar Cardiff City Street, and a major new public space in this scheme. The buildings along the street will define its edges, so massing, heights and the design and treatment of frontages are important. Taking budget into account, the team will need to decide whether a shared surface is appropriate and deliverable to the requisite quality.

**Station to Hayes link:** Options are being considered for public space/street from the train station towards The Hayes. The bus station location will have an impact on this. A decision will need to be taken about whether any of the route is sheltered/covered. This space may have a different function on event days if buses need access and will move through it. Solutions which address the existing level changes in this area are being considered and will need careful thought.

**Budget and phasing:** to be determined.

**Street design:** A hierarchy of streets is being considered, and will be influenced by pedestrian flow analysis and routes for different vehicle types. The widths of streets will need to reflect their use and will define the character of the public realm. The width of the streets will also determine the exact location of the BBC building.

**North-south streets:** The streets running north to south will be influenced by the location of and access to the bus station. Existing streets, such as Havelock Street and Scott Road, may become far less important. The decision to direct pedestrians to the river side of the Millennium Stadium, rather than up to Gate 5 is positive.

**Station Square:** The previously proposed arrangement of a grid pattern of paving, to fix the BBC building in its context, was welcomed by the Commission and we are less convinced by new iterations. However, the extent of new trees needs to be confirmed as part of this proposal and the potential impact of new Network Rail proposals for the Station frontage (if they were realised). There was discussion around the introduction of water features, and whilst large fixed ponds are best avoided, the Commission would not wish the team to close off the idea of more innovative and interesting ways of introducing water such as has been used at More London or elsewhere.

**North Square:** A second external space is being considered to the north of the site. The nature of this space will be determined alongside development of the buildings around it. It may provide semi-private space for residents of the adjacent buildings.

Sun/day light, views and noise will all contribute to the character of the space. There may be merit in considering raised levels or terracing of the space to improve these aspects and define privacy levels. In general there was support for a quieter green space that would be publicly accessible, though an extension to the east might be for residential tenants. This will need to be carefully designed and managed.

**Form, massing and building heights:** These are important elements of the masterplan which will affect a number other elements of the scheme. There should be a level of detail included in the masterplan which forms part of the planning application. There was support for the broad principle of stepping up in height towards the north, and ensuring that Central Square itself has a reasonably consistent level of enclosure.

It is recognised that the massing and building heights should respect the existing station building. There will also be an important relationship between the BBC building and those surrounding it. Building heights and density might influence the elevation design of the BBC building.

Some wind analysis will be useful to test different massing options for comfort and environmental performance. The location of underground services is also important in determining building footprints.

The working model demonstrated that a taller building might be appropriate on Wood Street at the corner of Marland Street adjacent to the BBC building. There is greater flexibility and opportunity for taller buildings north of Wood Street, provided Wood Street itself displays a generally consistent parapet line. The massing should consider joining up buildings so that they share party walls rather than leaving unusable gaps between them. This might include joining up new buildings to the blank side of the existing BBC Wales building.

**Mix of uses:** It is likely that many of the new buildings will accommodate a mix of uses. The uses of the various buildings might have an impact on the footprint, floor plates and massing (or vice versa). Public space should relate to the proposed uses in the surrounding buildings.

**Retail:** There are a number of things to be considered in relation to the retail space on the ground floor of the BBC building. These include the security line to BBC facilities; servicing to retail units; transparency; unit sizes, entrance locations and management and encouraging public use of the 'arcade' through BBC. There may be benefit in splitting the retail space along its length so that units are not dual aspect.

**Materials and lighting:** Materials and lighting of the public spaces and streets will be important and will be significant to the quality of the scheme. Buildings, trees and paving might all be used as part of the lighting scheme. Lighting might change with different events, and the square should be able to accommodate seasonal/festive arrangements.

**Event management:** Event management, especially the management of queuing on event days, will have a significant impact on the quality of the public space. This should be discussed in more detail at the next meeting with the Commission. Clear signage and wayfinding will be important. The impact of phasing on event management needs careful planning.

**BBC Headquarters building:** There is an aspiration to project/make visible the internal, technical uses of the building to the outside. This will require willingness from the BBC staff, and may vary between summer and winter.

Security control measures will be important and should ideally be incorporated into the design considerations and the earliest opportunity.

Encouraging BBC staff to leave the building and use facilities outside will be of benefit to the city economy and to life and activity in the Square.

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

## Attendees

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|-------------------------------|---|
| Agent/Client/Developer:       | Paul McCarthy, Rightacres   |
| Architectural/Urban Designer: | Foster & Partners:<br>Toby Blunt, Partner<br>Adam Newburn, Associate Architect  |
| Local Authority:              | Claire Moggridge, Cardiff Council<br>Nigel Hanson, Cardiff Council<br>Lawrence Dowdall, Cardiff Council                               |
| DCFW Design Review Service:   |   |
| Chair                         | Alan Francis, Chairman, DCFW  |
| Lead Panellist                | Ewan Jones, DCFW Panel<br>John Punter, DCFW Panel<br>Amanda Spence, Design Advisor, DCFW<br>Carole-Anne Davies, Chief Executive, DCFW |