



**Design Review Report:** 21 January 2004  
**Meeting Date / Material Submitted:** 15 January 2004  
**Location:** Junction Lock, Pierhead Street,  
Cardiff Bay  
**Architects / Design Team:** Stride Treglown  
Redrow Homes  
**Scheme Description:** 1 & 2 bed apartments  
296,000sq.ft.  
Affordable component 25%  
**Public/Other Body:** Cardiff County Council  
**Planning Status:** Pre-Application  
**If outline, date for detailed application:**  
**Case Officer:**

**Design Review panel members:**

### **Presentation:**

DCFW Design Review Panel appreciated the developers/designers giving them an opportunity to comment on the design of this scheme at the pre-application stage. A clear presentation, very useful model and brochure with key drawings greatly aided explanation and discussion. The Panel were supportive of many of the elements of the scheme though there were regrets that the mix of apartment sizes has been reduced because this reduces the social diversity in this very large scheme.

Our principal reservations as regards the proposal are as follows

### **Pierhead Street**

The failure to address Pierhead Street as a major urban street, one of the most important business streets in the Bay, is regrettable. The set backs generate wasted, negative spaces, as the adjacent Adventurers Quay demonstrates. The negation of the curve of Pierhead Street is a lost opportunity, especially with the two towers on the north eastern and north western corners. We would favour a continuous, curved building that followed the back of pavement line and addressed the street, with the towers anchoring the corners.

## **Block H: Twin Towers**

We were not convinced of the merit of connecting these two towers and creating a very considerable building bulk that will be quite oppressive on that corner. While we agree that the form might be treated in a very dynamic way we remain of the view that towers should be slender so that they do not block views while minimising shadows. The accommodation of all the affordable housing in the tallest block behind another major tower does not seem to us to be a well thought out solution, and we would prefer to see the social housing disposed in two blocks which would also offer more choice of living environments. By dramatically increasing the scale of development on the street, the creation of very well mannered buildings that minimise their apparent bulk and environmental impact becomes even more important. However, the current massing on that corner is oppressive and out of scale with the rest of the street,

We consider that the site as a whole can accommodate three towers at each corner of the site. If the waterfront tower were detailed to the highest standards it could go a couple of storeys higher, especially if this improved the massing and site planning on Pierhead Street and on Roath Basin.

### **The central amenity space**

We did not think anything was gained by opening this space up to Pierhead Street, and a public route through the car park is clearly not desirable. We consider that it should be treated throughout as private amenity space to increase the sense of ownership and privacy, and better enclosed with more greenery and landscaping. We would favour more decking of the car parking areas to create more attractive amenity space, and better enclosure of Falcon Drive by buildings and landscape.

### **The lack of retail and catering uses**

While we accept that such units will be difficult to let at profit making rents in the first instance, we do not consider it acceptable that some 300 metres of dockside and upwards of 600 people should have no shopping or catering facilities (we know there is an up-market café in Scott Harbour). Adventurers Quay is similarly devoid of facilities.

The following issues were discussed after the design team left the meeting as the panel wound up discussion. We apologise for not being able to raise them with you during the meeting and they are included here.

### **The Piazza**

We could not see the merit of the Piazza which had no active uses or public facilities to draw in the public. In fact its creation merely caused difficulties for the residents, reducing their privacy and requiring screening, the latter a rather unconvincing architectural device that would impair residential amenity. We would prefer to see the public space provided on the dock side on the south east corner of Scott Harbour (outside of the scheme perimeter) where a kiosk or café might be erected (if not by Redrow by others) that

would provide an attraction for the public who will want to explore the dockside. Such a space would have many more possibilities for public use and a fine sunny aspect, and would not impinge upon residential amenity.

We have no objections to the tower Block F though its detailed design requires great care. We would suggest reconfiguration of the site plan at this end of the site to enclose the piazza as private space and to minimise and “wind tunnel” effect around the tower. Throughout this project you need to give close attention to the junctions of towers and blocks to ensure they are elegant and do not create problem spaces.

### **Falcon Drive**

We spent much time discussing this and trying to improve it as a public route, creating a more enclosed street less exposed to the car park entrances and the exposed car parking to the east. However, when we considered the piazza and the ramp up to it, along with the underground car park entrance as the focal point of the street, we felt that it did not work as a pedestrian facility. We came to the view that public access to this area (and through access to the piazza) was unnecessary and that more effort should be expended creating a safe and attractive route on the west side of the drive going behind Regis House to the edge of Scott harbour.

### **Surface car parking**

Your decision to use the ground level for car parking will effectively destroy the quality of the dockside as a public realm and amenity. As with Adventurer’s Quay, which provides a most unfortunate precedent, the walkway will be lined with blank walls and car parking grilles. If you were to adopt even half basement car parking there would be the opportunity to hide the car parking while using steps and railings and other devices to maintain the privacy of the residents, and give them access to the dockside. This would humanise the walkway, make it more active, attractive and safe. This simple change would do more for the public environment in the Bay than any other.

### **Health Club/Gym**

We were surprised to see no such facility included in the scheme and considered it might be a viable commercial facility that would help to give the project a focus and meeting place. It was also a semi-public use that might help to animate at least a section of the dockside, and be a relief from the car park grilles and blank walls.

### **Further Assistance**

DCFW and its Design Review Panel are willing to meet again with the design team and offer further assistance should this prove useful.

End

***NB A welsh Language Copy of this report is available upon request***