



DESIGN
COMMISSION
FOR WALES
COMISIWN
DYLUNIO
CYMRU

Design Review Report

21/22 Park Place, Cardiff

DCFW Ref: N113

Meeting of 15th February 2018

Review Status

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

CONFIDENTIAL

15th February 2018
23rd February 2018
Cardiff
Residential
N113
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.

Consultations to Date

The design team have been in consultation with the local planning authority regarding the proposals for this site. This is the first time that the Design Commission for Wales has reviewed these proposals for this site.

The Proposals

The scheme is sited in a pair of townhouses on Park Place, home to several notable listed buildings, including the Grade I Park House immediately adjacent designed by William Burges. The site is in the Windsor Place conservation area and immediately adjacent to the Cathays Park conservation area. The proposal is for a change of use and extension to the existing villas, to residential use accommodating 17 luxury apartments. The frontage buildings were originally designed as houses but currently have an office function.

Main Points

The Design Commission for Wales welcomed the opportunity to review this important development at an appropriate time in the development of the proposal. The following key points should be given further consideration in the design process before a planning application is submitted.

From a design and placemaking perspective a residential use in this location would be appropriate if it is delivered to the standard required by the site and its context. It is positive that the villas are proposed to be maintained and an appropriate redevelopment of the land to the rear could contribute positively to the public realm.

Context

As the site is located within a Conservation Area and is adjacent to a listed building, a thorough site and context analysis and Conservation Area Appraisal should be undertaken and should clearly inform the proposals. This analysis will help in making decisions and should be used in the rationale for the choices made. For example,

considering the colour of different elements of the building as part of the composition of the street could help to inform which elements should stand out and which should recede.

Form and Massing

The massing as presented at the review causes some concerns in relation to the existing villas and the adjacent listed building. The existing white villas are built to a smaller scale than the surrounding buildings. The proposed transition in height from the 'back' of the site to the villas at the front is not currently successful and requires further consideration in how it manages the shift in scale. Starting at three storeys and seeing where it is appropriate to add to the massing could result in a more sensitive approach. Currently it is overbearing, but some amendments could address this problem, however, this may result in the loss of some accommodation on the top level.

The corner of the bay closest to the existing building on St Andrew's Place and its proximity to the existing building is also a concern and it appears intrusive. A survey needs to be undertaken to determine spot levels and check the height of existing and proposed buildings. Care should be taken to ensure that the images produced are not deceptive in relation to height and massing. A physical model would be helpful for testing and demonstrating the proposed massing. The proposal to recess new accommodation at roof level of the villas behind the line of the gable ends is a good strategy.

Parking and Active Edges

This is a central location with good public transport links that would justify lower parking provision. Currently the number of dwellings and associated car parking spaces are creating several challenges on this constrained site. In particular, the parking results in an inactive edge along St Andrew's Place that would not contribute positively to the public realm and may cause future issues of management and maintenance. Reducing the number of parking spaces would create scope to better address this edge. Additional ground floor units along this edge would help to address these concerns by providing more natural surveillance and an active edge.

An alternative to additional ground floor units would be a different use. Consideration could be given to the lifestyle of the target market for the properties and whether the ground floor could accommodate a use that would support this as well as activate the street edge. Uses to consider could include a coffee shop, gym, laundry room, meeting room, or a shared social or dining space.

Entrances

Further consideration of where the entrance(s) to the dwellings will be located could also help to connect better with the public realm. Relocating the main entrance to St Andrew's Place would bring more activity to the street. The ground floor units within the existing villas could have access from Park Place which would also support activity along this edge.

Design Concept

Development of the design concept will help to bring further clarity to the proposal. It is not clear if the current proposal has been conceived as a core element which is then added to with distinct pieces, or a single larger mass that has been shaped and carved to

create the building. For instance, it is not clear which of these two conceptual narratives the white bays to St Andrews Place are following. Simplification and conceptual clarity will benefit the scheme and must be applied with conviction. Consistent use of darker colours/tones for the new elements may allow the smaller form of the white villas to be read more clearly and prominently, helping to balance their smaller scale.

Affordable Housing Contribution

The affordable housing contribution should be delivered on site to support the development of a diverse community, unless there are specific circumstances that prevent this from being possible.

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

Attendees

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Design Review Panel:

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