



DESIGN  
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# Design Review Report

111-112 Bute Street,  
Cardiff

**DCFW Ref: N147**

Meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> July 2017



## Review Status

Meeting date	13 <sup>th</sup> July 2017
Issue date	26 <sup>th</sup> July 2017
Scheme location	Cardiff
Scheme description	Mixed use/residential
Scheme reference number	N147
Planning status	Pre-application

## CONFIDENTIAL

## 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.

None declared.

## Consultations to Date

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Pre-application discussions are ongoing with the Local Planning Authority (LPA). Statutory pre-application consultation is planned for August 2017. This was the first consultation with the Design Commission.

## The Proposals

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The site consists of a three-storey building bound by Bute Street, Ship Lane and a pedestrian alley which connects Bute St and West Bute St. It is within the Mount Stuart Conservation area and adjacent to the Grade II\* listed NatWest Bank, to which it is attached at first floor level. What were originally two separate buildings have been much altered and extended over the years to occupy the entire site, although the elevation to Bute St still acknowledges the scale and aesthetic of original Georgian domestic architecture of the Bute Town. The proposal is for the alteration and upwards extension to the existing buildings to provide residential accommodation and potential retail or office/hot desk facilities at street level. Proposals are at an early stage.

## Main Points

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The Design Commission welcomed the opportunity to be engaged on this project at a relatively early stage. Whilst the project has been in development for some time, it is helpful to engage with the architect at this stage as ideas are still being explored and there is scope to change and enhance the proposals.

This is a challenging site due to its physical constraints as well as its location within a conservation area and adjacent to a Grade II\* listed building. However, it presents the opportunity to explore the ongoing story of Bute Street which currently exhibits a mix of types of building and architectural styles which responded to the needs and ambitions of the time. This development should respect and enhance the character of the street but

should also be clear, and therefore potentially bold, in its intentions to bring the properties up to modern standards of accommodation.

### **Further Analysis**

The site and context analysis presented in the documentation is very good and should provide good basis for design strategy. The complex history and character of the conservation area is well described but not fully developed into an appropriate solution for the site. A heritage advisor is recommended to help understand the buildings in more detail as well as explore the hierarchy, grain and distinction between fronts and backs of the street, all of which will provide clues for the proposals for this plot. The proposals need to be framed in a very clear heritage story that picks up on the history and future of the area as well as architectural details.

### **Frontage**

Within the wider heritage story, justification needs to be provided for the number of additional storeys proposed as well as their position in relation to the building frontage. Further visual assessments of the streetscape, realistic views from the opposite side of Bute Street and section studies would help with this process. How much can be seen and the nature of what is seen are important considerations. It may be more appropriate to be bold with the new insertion whilst maintaining an appropriate scale, rather than trying to hide all the additional mass, but this needs to be tested and justified.

Visually, it would be beneficial for all three of the three-storey cottages to be considered and treated together to provide some consistency and coherence. Whilst it is understood that the third property is in separate ownership and comprehensive redevelopment may be challenging, any further opportunities to explore and pursue this should be taken.

### **Quality of Living Environment**

Of significant concern is the quality of living space that is being created behind the main facade. There are concerns regarding the amount of daylight that the units will benefit from as well as noise mitigation, security and ventilation requirements. This is most significant for the units on the ground and first floor. Opportunities to introduce more natural light into the units through more effective use of the proposed core or through alternative light-wells should be explored.

The current approach of keeping the development back from the edges of the site creates challenges within the heart of the site. An alternative approach may be to be bolder with the massing at the front and rear of the plot (taking into consideration the heritage context as highlighted above) which may free up some floor space to explore carving spaces into the centre of the site to allow more light in. These options should be explored in consultation with the LPA through this pre-app stage.

### **Public Realm**

Any opportunities to improve the quality of the environment within the lane should be taken. Whilst the lane itself is outside the applicant's ownership, there may be opportunities to work with the local authority to introduce public realm improvements

that would benefit the public and residents. Aspects to consider include public art, lighting, increasing the number and projection of windows onto the lane and the positioning of entrances.

### **Sustainability**

The retention and reuse of the building is a positive starting point for the sustainability of the scheme. It is also a location that is well connected to public transport and day-to-day facilities. An appropriate environmental strategy is required for the proposed redevelopment that takes into consideration the challenges regarding day light and ventilation.

### **Next Steps**

The challenges presented by the site are recognised. The provision of a high quality residential environment which also responds sensitively to its context within the conservation area requires a creative, well considered and tested response that is delivered to a very high quality. We do not underestimate the difficulties inherent to such a project. It is important to ensure that the residential units - people's homes - are the best that they can be for the benefit of the residents and to achieve the required return on investment. The development should also improve the quality and safety of the public realm as well as enhance the conservation area and setting of the listed building. We would welcome a further review of proposals should the programme allow.

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

### **Attendees**

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Agent/Client/Developer:	Sonia Mancisidor, Elgoibar Ltd John Knight, Elgoibar Ltd
Architect/Planning Consultant:	Victoria Coombs, Loyn + Co Luke Grattarola, Geraint John Planning
Local Planning Authority:	Ross Cannon, Cardiff Council

Design Review Panel:

Chair

Lead Panellist

Jamie Brewster

Angela Williams

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Steve Smith

Lynne Sullivan

Jen Heal, Design Advisor, DCFW

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Observers

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