

Statws/Status:
Cyfrinachol / Confidential



Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: 21 September 2007
Design Review Report:

Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd: 12 September 2007
Meeting Date / Material Submitted:

Lleoliad/Location: St Mary Street, Cardiff

Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun Scheme Description: Public Realm works

Cleient/Asiant: Client/Agent: Cardiff CC [Gareth Harcombe, Ross Cannon, Chris Vinestock]

Developer/Datblygwr: As above

Pensaer/Architect: n/a

Awdurdod Cynllunio: Planning Authority: Cardiff CC

Statws Cynllunio: Planning Status: n/a

Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/ Design Review Panel:

Alan Francis (cadeirydd/chair) Mike Biddulph
Cindy Harris b(swyddog/officer) Martin Knight
Kedrick Davies Ann-Marie Smale

Lead Panellist: Mike Biddulph

Sylwedyddion/Observers:

**Timothy Cantrell
SW England Design Review Panel**

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

St Mary Street in Cardiff city centre is a declining retail area, with a recent growth in licensed premises. With this public realm enhancement scheme the Council wish to revitalise retail uses, address issues of air quality, create better provision for pedestrians to encourage greater footfall, and enhance the conservation character of the area. Constraints include the existence of private off site parking accessed from the main street, and the servicing arrangements which are mostly from the front. The funding has been obtained but needs to be spent between March 08 and March 09.

The team have opted for robust kerbs rather than shared surfaces because of the volume of traffic which will remain. They have identified various key spaces, at High Street arcade, Central Market, and the junctions with Wood Street and Mill Lane. The arcade entrances would have the 'clutter' removed and a different surface treatment to form a 'doorstep'. Raised table pedestrian crossing points will calm traffic and establish pedestrian priority. Public art will be a major component, based on the city's public arts strategy, and integrated with the wayfinding strategy.

The feedback to the temporary road closure has been largely positive, apart from complaints about the servicing arrangements. The team have developed a range of options to deal with this:

- A single lane available for servicing, but this would decrease the width of pavements.
- Dedicated servicing lay-bys, although this could be disruptive and open to abuse.
- Servicing from the pavement, demarcated with street furniture and dropped kerbs, which would revert to full pedestrian use once servicing hours were over.

Whichever option is chosen, there may be difficulties for small retail units in negotiating restricted servicing periods, particularly those located in the arcades.

Discussions are ongoing as to whether buses and taxis should have reserved lay-bys or should stop in the street.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

The Panel commended the aspirations behind this presentation. It was confirmed that the Design Brief was intended to inform the engineering works and concern itself with details of construction and materials. However, the Panel thought that the brief should have been led by a landscape architect and was concerned to learn that there was no landscape consultant working on the team.

It was agreed that the volume of traffic [eg 200 buses an hour] would put pressure on particular crossing spaces, and that traffic calming would be achieved through physical measures and realignment, as well as a lower speed limit. The Panel advised that zones should be defined which established pedestrian priority. We thought that there should be a pedestrian crossing at the northern end opposite the castle.

The possibility of passing the problem of through traffic from one area to another was discussed. The team stated that part of the purpose of this trial was to see whether this happened, and whether people's choice of transport mode would be affected. They confirmed that they had not identified a single alternative route.

We thought that different patterns of use should be identified and inform the design development, including evening as well as daytime use. We were not convinced about the benefit of extra wide pavements irrespective of use and servicing pressures, although we were informed that the width varies along the length of the street. It was stated that a cafe culture might be developed to connect with existing outlets on Mill Lane, but might not be appropriate elsewhere.

The Panel would like to see appropriate planting [with suitable depth of soil and protection] providing that views of the principal buildings are maintained, and well designed street furniture using quality materials. We suggested that the team use a sequential approach to sourcing sustainable materials, starting with the most local. The use of recycled materials should also be considered eg the use of recycled glass as aggregate, to create a special effect. An avoidance of clutter was essential and any signage should be minimal and well integrated. It was confirmed that balustrading would not be used and, although a safety audit would be required, the Panel advised the team to challenge this where appropriate in order to achieve good urban design and user friendly spaces.

The Panel was informed that a lighting strategy would be developed which might also highlight the historic buildings and we suggested that a lighting artist could be used to help develop this. The Panel advised

strongly against the creation of isolated artworks at focal points and stated that the green stars indicating such features should be removed from the plan to avoid confusion. We thought it was essential that a public arts consultant should become involved as soon as possible.

The Panel stated that servicing on-pavement would inevitably lead to high maintenance costs, and surface and furniture materials would need to be especially robust. We thought that laybys should be avoided and the servicing strategy should rely on the management and policing of restricted access. If laybys were to be used for servicing they could be shared with taxis at different times of day and in the evenings. We were informed that air quality would be improved as traffic congestion would be reduced by 60-70%, and bus journey times would be more consistent.

In general the Panel thought that the design approach should favour simple, traditional solutions that were both flexible and formal. Different character areas, and rhythms of use should be established, encouraging variety without over-complication.

The Panel enquired whether any models or precedents had been used and was informed that the closest fit to the current proposal was Exeter High Street. We urged the team to look at good European examples and also at the proposed scheme for Exhibition Road in Kensington.

Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel supports the aspirations for public realm enhancement of this area of Cardiff city centre, including re-alignment of the street, traffic calming measures and the creation of high quality pedestrian space. We think the presented material forms the basis for an acceptable approach, but we would like to see the scheme again as the design develops. In particular:

- We think a landscape architect should be involved immediately and should lead the design development.
- The public arts component should be well integrated with the rest of the design and a consultant should be engaged as soon as possible.
- An essentially simple and traditional treatment should be achieved, sufficiently flexible to allow different adaptations over time.
- Different character areas and patterns of use should be identified and treated appropriately.
- Pavement width should not be maximised at all costs. Laybys may be appropriate but their use should be kept flexible.
- Balustrading should be avoided and street furniture kept simple

- Materials should be robust and sustainably sourced. A maintenance strategy should be developed alongside the material specification.
- A creative lighting strategy would help to make this scheme distinctive.

Diwedd/End

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