



DESIGN
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Design Review Report

179/185 Newport Road, Cardiff

DCFW Ref: N215

Meeting of 21st November 2019



Review Status

Meeting date	Public 21 st November 2019
Issue date	28 th November 2019
Scheme location	Cardiff
Scheme description	Residential
Scheme reference number	N215
Planning status	Application submitted

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

No previous reviews of proposals for this site by DCFW.

The Proposals

The proposal is for affordable residential accommodation for people of 55 years and over. In land use planning terms, it is considered a C2 use. There are 50 one and two bed apartments over three and four floors

Main Points

The proposed redevelopment of this vacant site is welcomed and the ambition of the client for well-designed homes that tackle the potential problem of social isolation is positive. However, a number of significant concerns were raised in the review, about the proposals as they currently stand. It is disappointing that a planning application has already been submitted as these issues should have been identified and addressed at a much earlier stage.

North-facing Apartments

The orientation of the site and proposed L-shaped configuration of the development, results in a large number of the apartments having a single, north-east-facing aspect. This means that these apartments will receive reduced daylight and very little sunlight resulting in no natural solar gain. Energy efficiency and performance is likely to be reduced, and the quality of living spaces will be poorer and less appealing a result. Quality of life does not seem to have featured in the design considerations. Furthermore, there is evidence that poorly planned schemes can have detrimental impacts on the physical and mental health of people.

More dual aspect apartments would not only benefit from greater levels of natural daylight and sunlight, they could also take advantage of the courtyard setting that is an attractive feature of the proposed development. This may result in a reduction in the

number of apartments that can be accommodated but quality of living space would be much improved and alternative arrangements could be explored to regain some capacity.

Social Isolation

Tackling social isolation is a positive ambition and the design of a development of this nature can have a significant impact on the ability of residents to gather and facilitate incidental meetings. The only internal space provided for this an enlarged lobby space which has no real function other than to pass through. This is not considered sufficient to meet the aim of 'tackling isolation amongst elderly tenants by encouraging social interaction' (as per the Design and Access Statement Introduction).

The corridors are long and narrow and therefore do not encourage incidental meetings. The width is likely to prove challenging if two people in wheelchairs were to need to pass. If designed more generously, potentially including places to stop, recessed doorways, windows from kitchens and more natural daylight, the corridors could contribute positively to the opportunities for social interaction, albeit, this would not address the fundamental problems associated with the single aspect apartments.

Some internal or undercover space that is linked to the courtyard would allow residents to appreciate the space and come together even when the weather is unpleasant. This has not been provided in the current scheme.

Learning from best practice and precedent should inform this scheme in relation to tackling isolation.

External Space

The landscape proposals for the courtyard include positive ideas regarding how to manage and integrate surface water run-off. This space could be very attractive and a positive asset for the development but currently it is disconnected from all the apartments that don't face on to it.

The mobility scooter store is located far from some of the apartments which may be challenging for some residents.

Massing and Character

A good analysis of the character of Newport Road was undertaken but is not reflected in the proposed design. The massing and roof form work against the verticality and rhythm of the road.

The proposed balconies on the Newport Road frontage compromise daylight into the rooms and will not provide a pleasant place to sit out due to the very busy nature of the road and accompanying noise and air quality considerations. Bay windows would be a more usable asset.

Parking and Servicing

The site is located relatively close to local amenities and public transport which would support a car-free approach. But consideration should be given to whether a carpool scheme would be of benefit to residents who may want to make some journeys by car. Thought should also be given to visitor parking for example for domiciliary care or if

friends or family come to stay. E-bike storage and charging and the potential for the bike store to grow if there is demand should also be explored.

Next Steps

For the reasons outlined above, the Design Commission is not supportive of the proposals. The desire for well-designed places to live which foster social interaction seem to have been compromised by previous decisions regarding the form of the building and the number of units proposed. A planning application has already been submitted but time and the opportunity to review the design in the context of the comments provided here are needed and may result in a different scheme that requires a different planning application. As a consequence of the above, it may be expedient to consider withdrawing the application to allow a review to take place

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

Attendees

Design Team:	Phillip Gibb, Powell Dobson Architects Elis Bedwyr, Powell Dobson Architects Catherine Etchell, CE Associates
Agent/Client/Developer:	Mark Davies, Wales and West Housing Steven Griffiths, Hale Construction
Planning:	Dylan Green, Asbri Planning
Design Review Panel:	
Chair	Kedrick Davies
Lead Panellist	Toby Adam
Panel	Jamie Brewster, Angela Williams, Richard Woods, Jen Heal, DCFW