

# Design Review Report

Adamsdown Supported Living, Cardiff

**DCFW Ref: N220**

Meeting of 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020



**Review Status**

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

**Confidential**

2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020  
15<sup>th</sup> April 2020  
Cardiff  
Residential – Supported Living  
N220  
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

---

No previous reviews of proposals for this site by DCFW.

## The Proposals

---

The material presents an early options stage for the redevelopment of the site by Cardiff Council for high needs supported housing for young people. Two options are presented comprising either eight or 10 single en suite rooms, two step-up units, staff areas for 24/7 staff presence, communal facilities and amenity space.

Option one locates the two step-up units separately facing onto Pearl Place whereas option two integrates these units into one building accessed from Pearl Street.

## Main Points

---

DCFW welcomed the opportunity to review proposals for this site at an appropriately early stage where options are being developed for the site layout. The Commission is supportive of the proposed use in this location and, although this is a constrained site, the opportunities for creating a facility that can help to serve and support some of the most vulnerable young people is fantastic and should be fully embraced. There is the potential for an inspiring scheme here which can set a precedent for other similar facilities within the city and beyond. However, clever design solutions are needed to achieve this and overcome the challenges of the site.

**Options**

The explanation of the social objectives of the development was very helpful and it is clear that the proposals are being well informed by the end user. The proposed step-up flats are intended to provide a greater level of independence as residents progress towards living separately from the facility. This, together with the urban design benefits, suggests

that option one which locates the step-up units on Pearl Place is the preferred option. This gives residents their own front door as well as providing greater enclosure and natural surveillance to Pearl Place and making this boundary of the site more secure.

If option one is taken forward, we suggest that the arrangement of the ground floor is reviewed to see whether windows from active rooms can be located to overlook Splott Road to provide natural surveillance.

### **Entrance and Public Realm**

It is positive that consideration is being given to how people will approach and enter the building, potentially through a projected lobby. The level change in front of the site created by the work undertaken to raise Splott Road Bridge has resulted in an awkward, unattractive and poorly detailed space which could create further problems in the future. The Commission would like to see thought given to how to eliminate this problem and improve this space as part of the proposal. It is a challenging problem to solve but this could be the last opportunity to address it for many years.

### **Form, Scale and Massing**

At this stage there was limited information on this. We support the idea of a simple and robust palette of materials which should be informed by analysis of the local context. Durability is important to ensure that issues such as graffiti are designed out or easy to address.

Further consideration needs to be given to the relationship in scale with the adjacent dwelling and also the how much this building should either stand out or blend into the context. While the previous citadel building was of a greater scale to the surrounding residential dwellings it was a building with greater significance. Greater height than the adjacent two storeys might be appropriate but the massing and overall appearance of the building needs to be treated carefully to set the tone of the building. The roof form will also have an impact on the scale and mass of the building. Sections, elevations and 3D views from different points should be used to test different ideas.

The analysis of proportions of form and fenestration in the context is welcomed and should be developed.

### **Sense of home**

A welcoming sense of home needs to be balanced against security requirements. Avoiding an institutionalised feeling is critical. Although the reception space is secure it should also be welcoming. The corridors and stair well should be generous, light and comfortable.

The proposed double height communal space opening out into the garden and the early consideration of warm, comfortable materials is positive and should be carried right through the design.

### **External Space**

The external space has the potential to provide a positive oasis and an additional range of activities for residents. Starting to design the landscape now will help to inform the relationship between the inside and outside. SuDS requirements need to be well integrated and the boundaries with the railway and adjacent properties treated securely and attractively.

The Commission questioned the need to accommodate parking spaces on the site given that the location is well connected via public transport and there is on-street provision in close proximity. However, we recognise the need to accommodate a one or two vehicles for the functioning of the facility.

### **Engagement**

In engaging with the local community, it is important to communicate the ethos of scheme and the benefits it will bring to residents and the development of a currently vacant site. Getting the scale and design of the building right in a way that will help it integrate into the neighbourhood will help with conversations about the design and use of the building.

Exploring opportunities for interacting with the local community could help residents develop additional skills and connections in the local area. The site is well located for this as there are a range of services and facilities nearby including a proposed community garden, church, and dance school.

A second review of the proposals would be welcomed at a stage when the proposal has been developed further but in advance of a planning application.

**Comisiwn Dylunio Cymru Design Commission for Wales is the trading name of DCFW LIMITED, a Private Limited Company established under the Companies Act 1985 and 2006, Company No: 04391072 incorporated in England and Wales. DCFW is a non-statutory consultee, a private limited company and a wholly owned subsidiary of the Welsh Government. Registered office: 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Cambrian Buildings, Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff CF10 5FL T: 029 2045 1964 E [connect@dcfw.org](mailto:connect@dcfw.org). The comment recorded in this report, arising from formal Design Review through our Design Review Service, is provided in the public interest for the consideration of local planning authorities as a material consideration and other users of the Design Review Service. It is not and should not be considered 'advice' and no third party is bound or required to act upon it. The Design Review Service is delivered in line with DCFW's published protocols, code of conduct and complaints procedure, which should be read and considered by users of the service.**

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

## Attendees

---

Design Team: Tanya Simeonova, Austin Smith Lord

Agent/Client/Developer: Abigail Phillips, Cardiff City Council  
David Jaques, Cardiff City Council  
Joseph Thomas, Cardiff City Council

Local Authority: Mike Biddulph, Cardiff City Council

Design Review Panel:

Chair  
Lead Panellist  
Panel

Jonathan Vernon Smith  
Jen Heal  
Steve Smith  
Michael Gwyther-Jones  
Carole-Anne Davies, DCFW  
Efa Lois, DCFW