

# Design Review Report

151-153 Bute Street, Cardiff

**DCFW Ref: N241**

Meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> of November 2020



## Review Status

Meeting date  
Issue date  
Scheme location  
Scheme description

Scheme reference number  
Planning status

## CONFIDENTIAL

12<sup>th</sup> of November 2020  
26<sup>th</sup> November 2020  
Cardiff  
Mixed-use development, including residential for older people and a boxing club.  
N241  
Pre-Application

## 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 and meeting Agenda items. Any such declarations are recorded here and in DCFW's central records.

### Note on current operational context:

The Design Commission for Wales is operating during necessary public health measures due to the impact of the Coronavirus Covid 19 pandemic and this report follows the recent online review meeting.

## Consultations to Date

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None with DCFW.

## The Proposals

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The proposed development will replace sheltered housing accommodation for residents at Nelson House, by providing between 40-50 one and two-bedroom apartments and incorporating communal spaces and facilities that allow for the provision of on-site care.

The proposals also include a new community boxing club.

## Main Points

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### **Design Development**

The Design Commission welcomed the early stage consultation on this project and is supportive of the principle of redevelopment of this site on Bute Street.

It was encouraging to see how the design had evolved from the pre-review material to what was presented in the review, particularly the greater emphasis on daylight to internal corridor spaces. The time allocated within the project for design evolution is commendable and should result in a scheme that works well within its surroundings. It could be beneficial to further test the scale of certain elements of the scheme within the street and wider context.

This proposal aspires to benefit the wider community, and a mixed-use development could be a step towards this goal.

## **Community Engagement**

Engagement with the community is key to the success of this development. Community consultation should consider the diversity and various languages of the community.

Consultation under current circumstances could take many forms, and online video consultation may not be the most convenient for all members of the community. Physical displays on site, leaflets and displaying contact numbers are a few of a whole array of potential methods of community engagement that could be utilised.

The proposals may have benefitted from earlier community engagement on this project, as this would have informed the design team while they were designing prior to the current stage. Without sufficient community engagement there is a danger that the proposed designs do not align with community need, respond to how the facilities might be used and reflect the identity of the local area.

The proposals could benefit from engaging an artist in the community engagement process. This could be an opportunity to create something that will contribute to the development and could be an opportunity to engage with and the local community. A specialist in this field would be most suited to undertake this task.

## **The Easement**

The easement is currently both a problem and an opportunity – it has the potential to become a very unpleasant space that could be underused and attract antisocial behaviour, and further design work is required in order to ensure that it becomes a successfully designed and pleasant space. If designed unsuccessfully, it could become a space that makes residents feel anxious. Finding practical ways of activating this space with pop-up uses or a strong link with the boxing club will help resolve this.

## **Mix of uses**

Although a boxing club would typically have an introverted use, and an inactive street frontage, this development would benefit from exploring how to activate the street frontage for the boxing club, in order for it to engage more successfully with the wider public realm.

The public/private spatial uses within the design are not yet resolved and would benefit from further consideration.

## **Communal Space**

The proposal currently has a lot of communal space, and it is of key importance that the viability of this amount of communal space within the project is examined from a commercial perspective, to avoid overpromising in that respect. It is of key importance that this viability is examined prior to consultation.

The amount of communal space will also have management and maintenance costs, and their viability should be considered early in the process.

## **Permeability**

The site plan and project images as presented suggest a level of visual permeability at the edges that might not be deliverable due to concerns about the security and safety of residents. This design question should be realistically addressed, ideally before any consultation, so there are no misconceptions about how the site perimeter is going to be handled.

## Summary

In summary the Design Commission welcomed this early consultation. The Commission would be happy to welcome the team returning with further design development, particularly focussing on an appropriately contextual architectural response to the building appearance.

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

## Attendees

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|--------------------------|---|
| Agent/Client/Developer:  | David Jaques, Cardiff Council<br>Joseph Thomas, Cardiff Council   |
| Architect/Design Team    | Jordan Green, AHMM<br>Cormac Farrelly, AHMM<br>Iain Williams, AHMM<br>Robert Bennell, AHMM<br>Jason Ramlugon, AHMM<br>Lee Morris, WYG |
| Local Planning Authority | Mike Biddulph, Cardiff Council<br>David Davies, Cardiff Council   |
| Chair:                   | Kedrick Davies  |
| Lead Panellist:          | Toby Adam   |
| Design Review Panel:     | Michael Gwyther-Jones<br>Neil Williamson<br>Jen Heal, Design Advisor, DCFW<br>Efa Lois, Place Advisor, DCFW                           |