

Design Review Report

New Penn Site, Cardiff

DCFW Ref: 290

and

Former Fairwater Social Club, Cardiff

DCFW Ref: 291

Meeting of 17th November 2022



Review Status

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

Public

17th November 2022
29th November 2022
Both are Residential
Both are in Cardiff
N290 + N291
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 and meeting Agenda items. Any such declarations are recorded here and in DCFW's central records.

Mike Biddulph, of Cardiff Council, is a DCFW Commissioner. All were happy to proceed.

Consultations to Date

None.

The Proposals

New Penn Inn, Cardiff

The proposals are for 11 units of family housing on the site of the former New Penn pub, a brownfield site in the ward of Pentwyn. The intention is to strengthen key frontages on to Circle Way West and Brynfedw Road, as well as improving natural surveillance of the pedestrian path through the existing woodland to the South West. Development in the area is at a low density, and the pattern of highway access is typical of Radburn design with few pedestrian links. Buildings are clustered in scaled groups of to 2 and 3 storeys. There are good travel connections with Circle Way West highway arcing the site from the south-west to north-east with a bus route. A public right of way runs alongside to the west of the site at a lower level, leading from a subway, adjacent to the extensive wooded open SINC area.

Former Fairwater Social Club

The proposals are for approx 15 units of family housing adjacent to Fairwater Park, with a main entrance from Plas Mawr Road; dwellings face Ferrier Avenue, and a couple are accessed directly. New dwellings also face the park entrance to the South, increasing surveillance and activity on this public route. There is an approximate 10m change in level across the site. Category A and B trees are located at edge of the site. The site is bordered by a substation, and cables run along western edge of the site.

Main Points

The panel appreciated the clearly communicated nature of both presentations and seeing both schemes early in their respective design development.

New Penn Site, Cardiff

The analysis presented with this scheme was thorough, but it would benefit from a wider analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of the Radburn nature of the surrounding development. Proposed demolition of the existing buildings on the site may be justified but this should be set out in the documentation. The presentation would also benefit from demonstration of fuller testing of options, illustrating what alternative layouts have been explored including some that may be more radical.

Form and materials of the buildings require further exploration. Although the design needn't directly reference surrounding building materials in this context, an exploration of the distinct visual identity of each of the two sites should be undertaken.

The most successful part of the scheme is how it relates to Circle Way West. However, this arrangement presents the need to establish how the fronts and backs of these properties will be used as it is likely that most people will enter through the 'back'.

The design of the dwellings would benefit from further exploration in section and plan. In particular, the semi-detached units in the south eastern part of the site would benefit from further design testing and exploration. It will be key, as this design is developed further, to explore the relationship of the site with adjacent properties, the site boundaries, and edge conditions. The Radburn arrangement of neighbouring properties and the strong urban grid that this imposes on the locality should be recognised. Further testing should consider the imposition of this grid as a possible means to create a more rigorous site layout.

The Panel are keen to understand the parking strategy, and whether alternative arrangements for integration of parking or provisions for alternatives have been considered.

The provision of a level pedestrian crossing across circle way might allow the under-pass to be stopped-up, allowing an improved treatment of the western boundary. This could

be beneficial to this scheme, and it is worth exploring how this might alter the layout as desire lines will now be directed towards the at-grade crossing.

The brief for environmental performance seems to be evolving but should be established as soon as possible and as prescriptive as possible.

Former Fairwater Social Club Site, Cardiff

A demonstration of options and layouts tested for this site in three dimensions would be beneficial when presenting the scheme. Currently the homes to the south could have very poor sunlight due to their orientation and overshadowing from trees and alternatives should be explored.

This proposal would benefit from further exploration of how the access road could be incorporated into the scheme to create an attractive setting for the dwellings. If part of the vision is to relate to the park, it would also benefit from exploring the potential of a direct connection into the park, and/or other opportunities for further connections.

As with the other scheme, the form and the materials of the buildings require further exploration.

The proposals would clearly be better without the mast, but if it is a requirement, there could be benefits in exploring alternative mast locations, as well as alternative locations for the bungalow on site. Whether the existing club house could be retained and re-purposed should also be considered and included in any further presentation.

As topography is a difficult aspect of this site, exploration, and development of the design in plan, section and using 3D model (digital or physical) would be beneficial. Testing of the orientation of amenity spaces would also greatly benefit the scheme.

The site imposes a number of difficult and awkward constraints and the challenge in addressing each one is recognised. It may therefore be more beneficial to identify and focus on a single unique aspect and maximise the response to this. Options to consider an alternative mix of development, such as mixed-use, an 'industrial' terrace or live-work units, might be appropriate and may better reflect the unique characteristics of this site.

Next Steps

It is worth building a story around both of these developments – and what living in these places would mean for the day-to-day lives of those living here.

The Commission would welcome further engagement on these schemes.

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

Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer:	David Jaques, Cardiff Council Joseph Thomas, Cardiff Council Beverley Bailey, Cardiff Council
Architect/Design Team:	Sara Ifan, Powell Dobson Rita Faro, Powell Dobson Katherine Parsons, Powell Dobson
Local Authority:	Mike Biddulph, Cardiff Council

DCFW Design Review Panel

Chair:	Kedrick Davies
Lead Panellist:	Jamie Brewster
Panel:	Jen Heal, DCFW, Design Advisor Steve Smith Simon Carne Barny Evans Efa Lois, DCFW, Place Advisor