

Design Review Report

Mill Street,

Newport

DCFW Ref: N151

Meeting of 6th October 2017



Review Status

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

CONFIDENTIAL

6th October 2017
23rd October 2017
Newport
Residential
N151
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.

Ian Carter of Garrison Barclay Estates Ltd is on the Board of DCFW. All present were content to proceed following this declaration.

Consultations to Date

Formal pre-application consultation with the local planning authority is taking place. Formal 28-day public consultation is planned for November 2017.

The Proposals

The site is close to Newport train station and the River Usk and looks onto a residential terrace (Locke Street) to the north. The site consists of a vacant 5 storey office building, the former Royal Mail Postal Exchange. The site is allocated for residential development in the Local Development Plan.

The scheme proposes the conversion and extension of the existing building to provide approximately 130 1, 2 and 3 bedroom single storey apartments. A two storey extension is proposed on top of the existing roof structure with an additional extension proposed to the east. The scheme retains an existing undercroft as a parking/entry area. Each floor is proposed to be converted with rows of apartments arranged either side of a circulation corridor (which infills an existing light-well) with accommodation set back from the building edge to create private terraces.

Main Points

The Design Commission welcomes the early engagement in the design review process. Reuse of the existing building structure to provide housing in this central, sustainable location is positive.

The following points summarise key issues from the review and should be considered to inform further work on the scheme:

Vision for living and quality

Although there is some uncertainty about tenure, it would be useful for the team to clearly set out their ambitions for living quality in a vision statement. This will help guide the design process alongside commercial ambitions and viability testing.

Issues such as daylight, views, circulation environment, amenity space and thermal comfort will be important to achieving a good quality living environment. It is unfortunate that the qualities of the existing light-well have been lost in the current proposals. Consideration should be given to how this could contribute positively to the quality of circulation space.

Daylight levels in the north facing units need to be demonstrated.

Given the uncertainty, it is important that features that will promote a quality residential development, including internal and communal spaces, are identified and locked in at the planning stage.

Scale and massing and density

This is a centrally located site that could accommodate higher density development at a city scale. However, the number of units and the scale of the proposed new development should be balanced to ensure that the quality of the residential environment is not compromised by trying to fit too many units onto the site.

Demonstration of methodical testing of different scale and massing options, including the vertical and side extensions will help to justify the final proposal. Testing should consider the following:

- Structural capacity of existing building
- Overshadowing of the site and surrounding uses
- Silhouette and cityscape impact
- Overlooking/privacy of adjacent residential properties
- Number of units/viability
- Combined effect of proposed surrounding development
- Proportions

Drawing and modelling the proposal with context will clearly show impact on context.

Energy and services strategy

Energy and services strategies should be fully integrated as a next step. Plant, storage and service risers may have an impact on layout and numbers. Running costs should be considered.

Early, informative environmental modelling and testing is encouraged.

The ground floor and landscape

The ground floor undercroft and landscape should be given further consideration as the current proposals could result in a negative space that does not contribute to an attractive and safe streetscape or welcome for residents. The design will have to sensitively manage a number of issues including:

- Security
- Boundaries

- Arrival and entrance experience for residents and visitors on foot or by car
- Parking
- Cycle storage
- Landscape
- Impact on streetscape

Inclusion of residential units on the ground floor could provide greater natural surveillance but would need to be fully justified by demonstration of appropriate daylight levels and privacy.

An innovative landscape and urban design solution that may extend beyond the red line boundary of the site could make a positive contribution to the city. Improvements to local walking and cycle routes and connections to local amenities and transport should be considered. The public value of the scheme should be identified and maintained throughout the design and planning process.

The Design Commission encourages the early involvement of a landscape architect.

Façade articulation

The articulation of the façade will be important to both the external appearance of the building and the quality of spaces internally through manipulation of daylight and views. The north facing units need careful consideration to deal with overlooking and lack of sunlight. Different options should be methodically tested. Balconies, window proportions, plan depths and floor heights will be important.

Consideration should be given to whether the new build will be of a similar character or significantly different to the existing building. Different options should be explored and a clear rationale provided for the decisions made.

Next Steps

We would welcome the opportunity to review proposals for this site again prior to a planning application being submitted.

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

Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer:	Ian Carter, Garrison Barclay Estates Ltd
Architect/Planning Consultant:	Daniel Ellis & Andrew Aust, Expedite Mike Southall, GVA
Local Planning Authority:	Chris Simms, Newport City Council Gail Parkhouse, Newport City Council
Design Review Panel:	
Chair	Jen Heal, Design Advisor, DCFW
Lead Panellist	Jamie Brewster Toby Adam Amanda Spence, Design Advisor, DCFW