

# Cardiff Council Planning Service

## Design Review Annual Report 2023

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg / This document is available in Welsh

- The group is made up of the Placemaking Team and Development Management Officers progressing relevant planning applications.
- The Design Review group met 28 times in 2023.
- The group reviews the design quality of developments against relevant local development plan design policies, adopted supplementary planning guidance and also other advice, including Welsh Government Technical Advice Note 12 Design.
- The most mutually beneficial process of review starts at a pre-application stage, typically with sketchy concept schemes which allow an open and positive discussion about the structure, scale and character of any emerging design and which can quickly progress to a detailed consent. The process aims to help positively direct the form and character of new developments in Cardiff in order to secure design improvements and help applicants readily get permission for development.
- The discussion is minuted and comments are reported back to applicants where revisions are necessary.
- The meeting commented on 59 schemes in 2023, including:

### Site of the New Pennsylvania public house, Llanedeyrn (23/02475/FUL):

A planning application for eleven family social housing units to form part of the council's Cardiff Living programme. The project has involved input by the Placemaking team since project inception. The final scheme re-establishes an element of traditional frontage, a footpath and at-grade crossing of Circle Way West. The layout, massing, roof form and elevational design were all regarded as well resolved.

### Former Howell's Department Store (23/02286/FUL):

A phase of the regeneration of the listed former department store. The principle of adding additional storeys to the existing Wharton Street building was accepted (outlined in red), following careful analysis of key views in a sensitive setting. There were some concerns about changes to the facade. The plan to expose the former Bethany Chapel and Sunday School was enjoyed. The landscape design for the emerging courtyard was considered to be good.



Site of the New Pennsylvania public house, Llanedeyrn, Powell Dobson Architects



Former Howell's Department Store, Patel Taylor Architects

**Friary House, Greyfriars Street  
(23/01174/FUL)**

The meeting reviewed the evolving scheme for Friary House on two occasions. The scheme was assessed within wider heritage views. Localised light impacts were explored. The facade design also went through various iterations to improve the scheme at street level, better define discrete areas of mass and significantly improve the character of the tower. The final scheme includes significant public realm improvements.



**Friary House, Greyfriar's Road**  
Westworks Architects and  
Rio Architects

**Medallion House, Crwys Road  
(23/01914/FUL):**

Two iterations of a scheme to redevelop the large block at the heart of the street. The scale and amenity impacts of the scheme were discussed. Some felt that the scale might be more modulated in an area where the scale of development is much lower.



**Medallion House, Crwys Road** Rio Architects

**Longcross Court  
(PA/23/00169)**

The meeting has reviewed a number of iterations of a preapplication for a student accommodation scheme on the site of Longcross Court on the corner of Newport and City Roads. The scale of the development was debated in context, whilst internal and external amenity issues resulting from the mass were noted.



**Longcross Court, Newport Road**  
Corstorphine and Wright Architects



Cardiff Arena Populous Architects

**Cardiff Arena and Atlantic Wharf Masterplan (23/01705/VAR)**

A proposal for the final design of a slightly smaller arena was welcomed and regarded as an improvement on the character of the original building. The meeting offered criticism of the replacement Travelodge hotel. Aspects of the wider masterplan were also reviewed and unresolved issues were highlighted.

**The Old Coach House, The Deanery, Llandaff**

A proposal involved extending the former stables building associated with The Deanery which sits at the heart of the Llandaff village conservation area. The proposal is an overdevelopment and not sympathetic to the scale and character of the area, or necessarily subservient to the neighbouring listed building. It was also thought to have negative amenity impacts on neighbouring properties. Aspects of the design were also considered unattractive and not in keeping.



Old Coachhouse, Deanery, Llandaff R. Hughes

### **Knox Court (22/02604/FUL)**

We saw a further iteration of the proposal to convert the Knox Court office building into a co-living scheme. The group continued to express concern about the quality of the accommodation being proposed, with limited communal space provided for the shared aspect of the development, and some private elements seeming to be quite small. Concern was also expressed about the scheme having a minimum stay of only a month, which might make the population transient. Some felt that the dark rooftop extension appeared quite heavy, and a lighter colour might be explored.

### **Many Trees, Bruton Place, Llandaff (23/02048/FUL)**

A proposal for a recessive single storey home on the site of a former garage. The contemporary design responds well to most aspects of the setting, but seems to impact on trees. We queried the use of painted brick on the front elevation, and sought a condition on this issue. A good example of contextual contemporary design.

### **Madina Masjid Mosque (23/02402/FUL)**

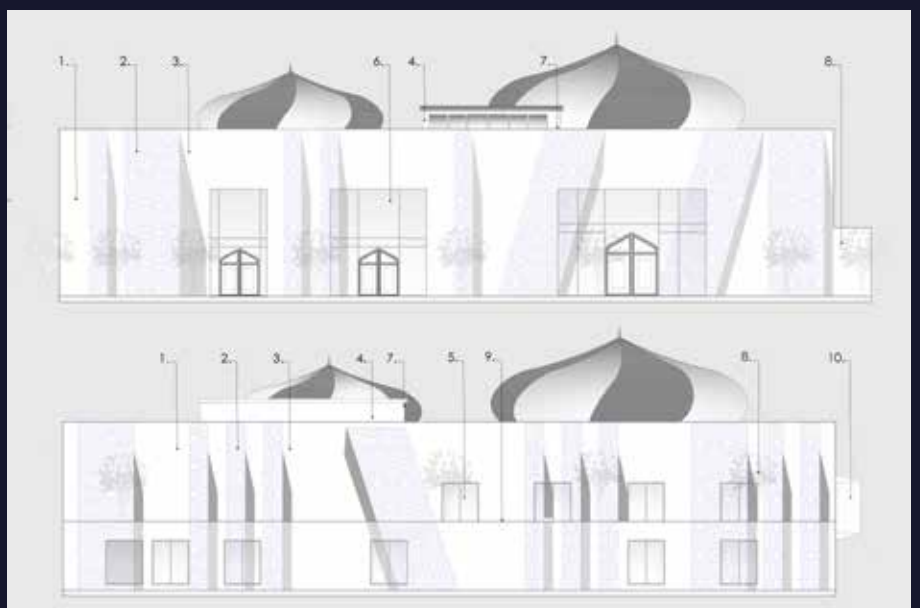
Significant proposal for a new mosque in Cathays was considered broadly acceptable in terms of scale and mass, whilst its singularity and clean lines were considered acceptable, given the building's purpose. We queried the materials, if the whiteness is to prevail. Some aspects of the design drawings were considered a bit thin and we sought more information about the appearance of the domes.



Knox Court Expedite Architects



Friary House proposal in the Cardiff city centre and Bay model



Madina Masjid Mosque, Cathays R. Hughes

**Former Wharf Public House, Schooner Way (PA/23/00068)**

A third iteration of this large proposal for dockside development. We queried the quantity and disposition of the communal provision in what is a co-living scheme. We also queried the viability of a cafe. The scheme is considered to be a very significant scale and some elements are out of character with the general scale of development in the immediate context. The buildings were considered an attractive mill pastiche.



**The Wharf** Chris Waterworth Architects



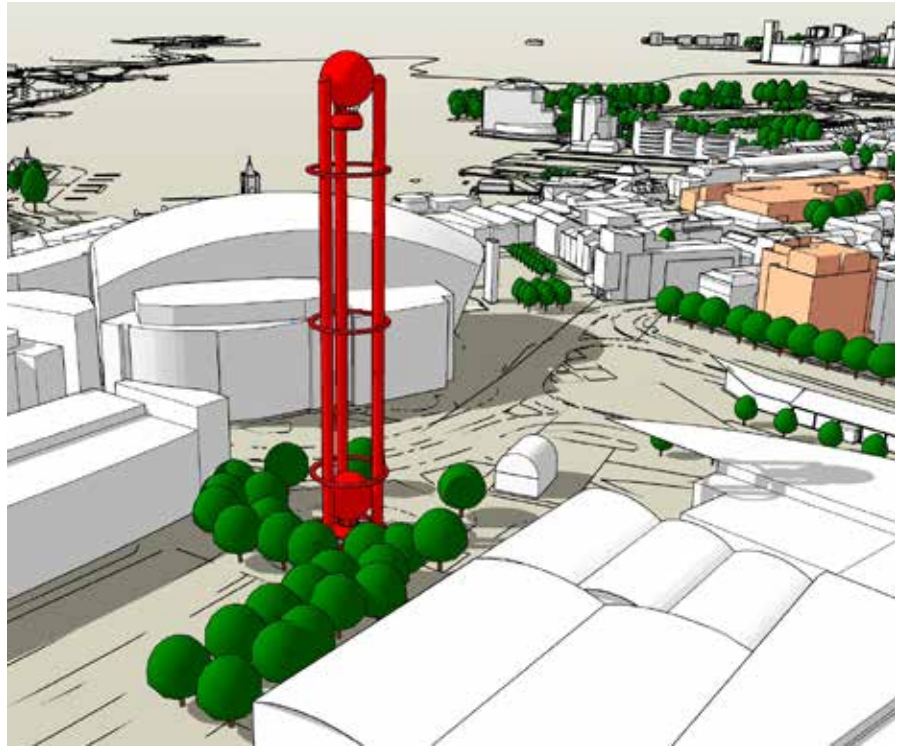
**Cantonian Educational Campus** HLM Architects

**Cantonian Educational Campus (23/01501/FUL)** Members of the Placemaking team advised the council's procurement team and process for the design work leading to this planning application. As a result, all of the major placemaking issues had been thoroughly resolved by the time the application was submitted for planning permission. The configuration and design of three schools on one campus was welcomed. The meeting discussed access and drop off, the design of the entrance plaza, scale and mass, neighbour impacts, the elevational treatments, the use of solar panels, arrangements for out of hours access, landscape design and the drainage.

**Skytower** Promoted as a potential visitor attraction in Cardiff Bay we reviewed a scheme for a balloon/gondola ride. We queried the viability of this for much of the year, and whether the tunnel on which it sits was strong enough to support the structure, or how a foundation might be built. We also queried if the future alignment of the Metro link to a planned Pierhead station would possibly clash with the attraction. We noted that the marketing of the business case involved a plan to use the structure as advertising and agreed that this may not be readily supported in a sensitive setting and adjacent to the listed Wales Millennium Centre and nearby conservation areas. It was agreed that it may also compromise thinking for how the area might develop as part of the wider Atlantic Wharf masterplan.

#### **51-59 Penarth Road (22/02977/FUL)**

A major submission that came to us with no pre-application discussion, we sought to resist the initial scheme. The revised scheme still lacked adequate detail on some issues and wasn't as developed as many significant city centre schemes in a prominent position. We queried the efficiency of the floor plan, thought that the elevation lacked richness and queried the use of an engineering brick. Ideas for landscape design were not well explained or mapped onto the architectural design. We also suggested improvements to the landscaping and cycle parking. The scale and mass of the development was accepted, and we couldn't see any neighbour impacts.



Skytower in our City Centre and Bay Model



51-59 Penarth Road. Top: initial proposal. Bottom: resubmission unattributed

## 700 Newport Road (23/01005/FUL)

An example of a typical infill development. This was a revised submission that had been reduced in scale to sit more comfortably in its setting. We suggested that living spaces face south, and noted a poor provision for cyclists and positioning of bins. The “timber effect” cladding is not characteristic of the area.



700, Newport Road David Owen Associates Architects

These are just some examples of developments looked at this year, and hope to give a reasonable impression of the scope of designs reviewed and issues considered. Some pre-application drawings are not in the public realm and therefore can't be shared here.

The design review process has provided responsive comments on the design of proposals at pre-application and application stages to help positively direct the form and character of new developments in Cardiff in order to help applicants get permission for development. The process has consistently delivered revisions to schemes to deliver improvements on a large range of urban, architectural, landscape and engineering design issues.

Advice on what constitutes both good and poor design is presented in national planning policy guidance, the Cardiff LDP and also in Cardiff's adopted supplementary planning guidance. These are available on the Council website. Further advice can also be provided by the Placemaking team who can be contacted at the email address below.

*Images are used in this report to illustrate the range of schemes reviewed by the service at various stages of their progress. Their inclusion does not indicate support for a development by Cardiff Council or seek to prejudice the normal planning decision making process.*

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