



## TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Harlech Court, Bute Terrace, Cardiff

New residential tower with commercial ground and first-floor uses and public square.

## CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	1
Policy Context	2
Proposed Development	3
Zone of Visibility	4
Townscape Character	5
Baseline Conditions	6
Townscape Appraisal	7
View Location Plan	8
Close-Range Views	
St Davids 2	9, 10
Bru	11, 12
Ty Admiral	13, 14
Utilita Arena	15, 16
Medium-Range Views	
Dumballs Road	17, 18
Callaghan Square	19, 20
Celerity Drive	21, 22
Tyndall Street	23, 24
Long-Range Views	
Ocean Way	25, 26
Cardiff Castle	27, 28
Conclusion	29





Site Location and Context

- |                   |                        |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Altolusso      | 8. Ty Admiral          |
| 2. Citrus Hotel   | 9. Cineworld           |
| 3. Utilita Arena  | 10. St Davids 2        |
| 4. Park Inn Hotel | 11. St Davids Car Park |
| 5. Meridian Plaza | 12. Zenith             |
| 6. Radisson Blue  | 13. Copperworks        |
| 7. John Lewis     | 14. Ty Pont Hearn      |

INTRODUCTION

This Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been prepared by CWA on behalf of the client, Draycott Group, to accompany the planning application for the development of Harlech Court.

The development site is situated north of the railway and south of Bute Terrace. Altolusso is to the west, and the Citrus Hotel is to the west. The podium is shared with the hotel.

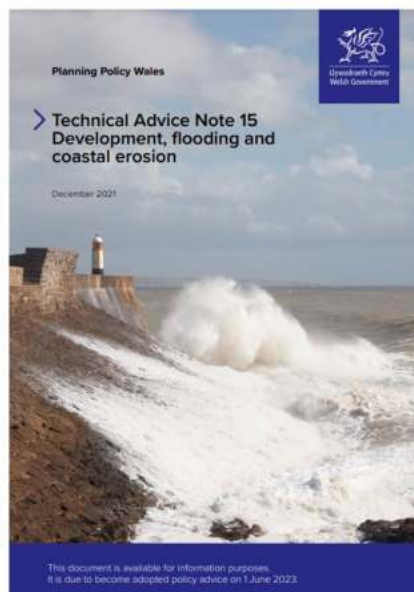
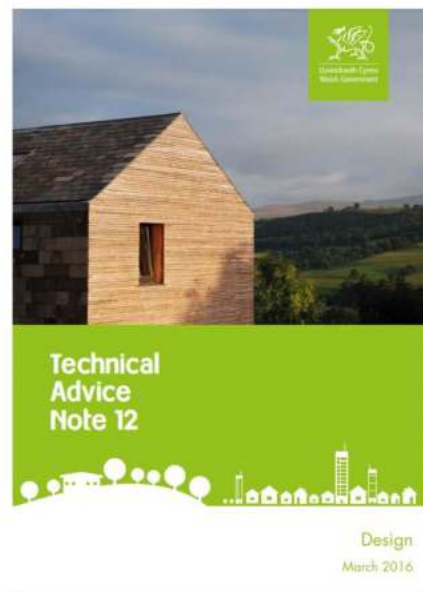
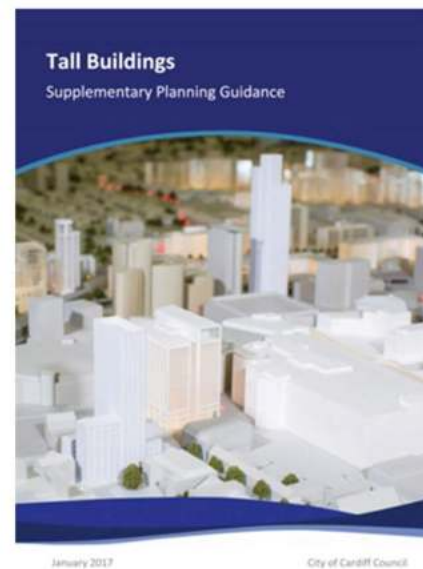
This TVIA has been prepared to provide an analysis of the potential townscape and visual effects arising from the proposed development. It has been undertaken broadly in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition, generally considered to be best practice - with reference to the relevant planning policy context including Cardiff Council's Tall Buildings SPG (2017)

In summary, the assessment considers:

1. The townscape character of the site and its surroundings.
2. The visual role of the site in the surrounding area.
3. The sensitivity of the existing townscape and views to change, having regard to the susceptibility of receptors to change and the value of the townscape and visual resources.
4. The scale and extent of the change to the townscape and views that would result from the proposed development.
5. The effects of the proposed development on key townscape and visual receptors and whether the change would be beneficial, neutral or adverse.
6. Cumulative effects in combination with development in the surrounding area.







## POLICY CONTEXT

The relevant policy for this application is the Cardiff City Council Adopted Plan (January 2016).

Further considerations include:

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11) February 2021

Technical Advice Notes (TAN)

2: Affordable Housing

11: Noise

12: Design

15: Flooding

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

The development considers many of the Cardiff SPG, the main ones include:

Residential Design Guide

Tall Building Design Guide

Planning Obligations

Waste Collection and Storage Facilities

Cardiff Council City Centre Design Guide (1994)

As the proposal is over the 25m or 8 storey benchmarks, the Tall Buildings Design Guide is involved heavily. Suitability of the location is a key criterion here, as the site is well connected and the design aims to provide a non-invasive contribution to the skyline.

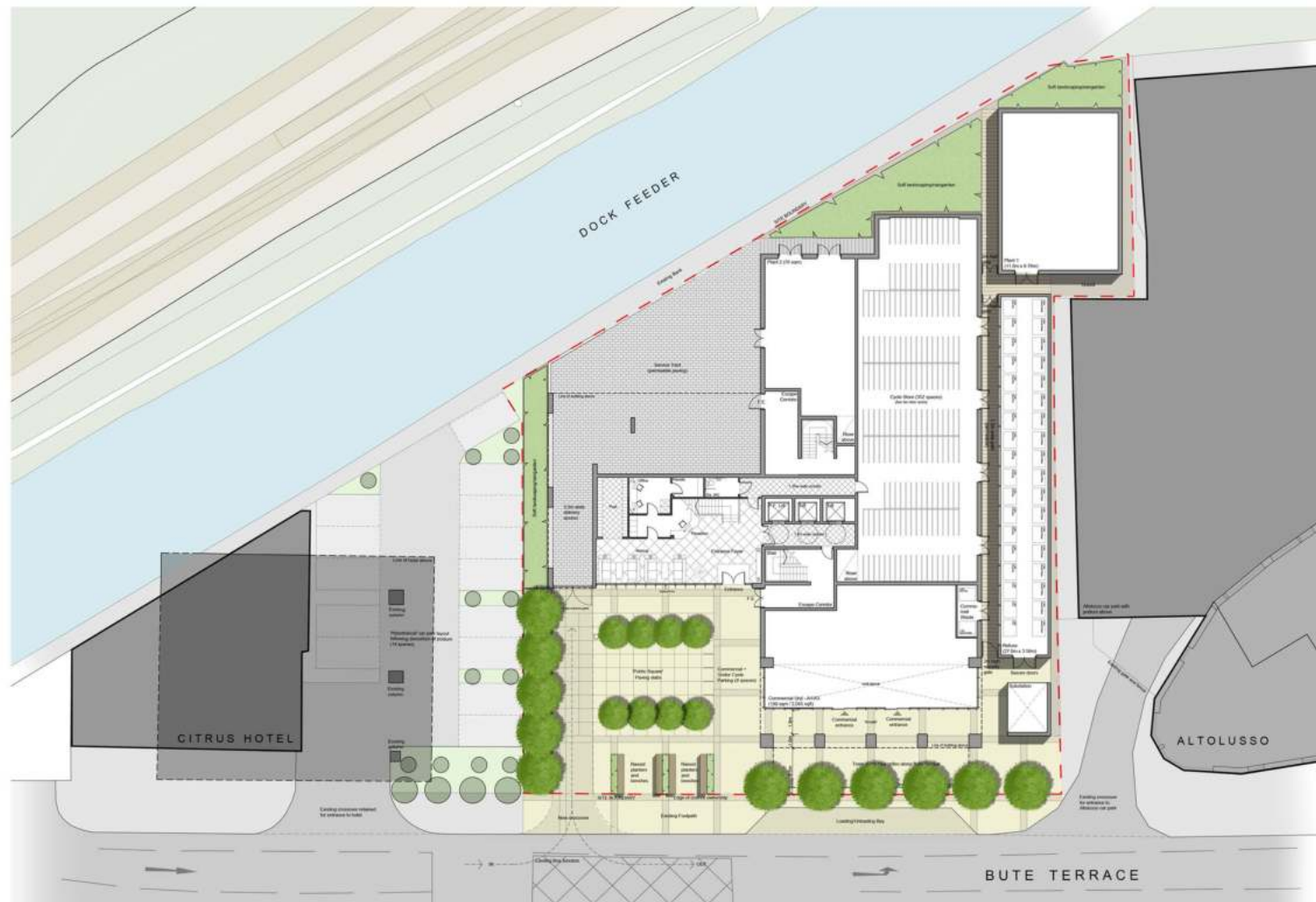




Proposed Perspective from Mary Ann Street



Proposed Front Elevation to Bute Terrace



Proposed Site Plan

## PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposal is for the replacement of a 1970's office building, its associated ground and first-floor podium uses, second-floor podium car park and ramp structure, with a 28-storey residential tower with mixed use ground floor and associated external public realm and operational spaces.

The proposal sits within an existing tall building group at the southern end of the City Centre.

The building will sit further from Bute Terrace than the existing podium. This will allow a larger expanse of the public realm which will include seating and planting.

The plaza extends into an arcade with a commercial unit beyond. Further back is the residents entrance into a reception.

The overall form comprises 2 interlocking towers with a feature piece atop which will house both apartments and amenity space. The cladding is coloured to be sympathetic to the context while maintaining a sense of modernity.

Vehicular access will be through the plaza to a small, gated car park at the rear.

Cycle parking is down a gated lane off the plaza, as is the refuse store.





## ZONE OF THEORETICAL VISIBILITY (ZTV)

The ZTV identifies potential lines of sight between the scheme and the view with an eye level of 1.6m (the median of male and female heights). It has been based on the ground terrain and existing features.

Screening by vegetation and proposed projects have not been included, as such the visibility will likely be even less. Visibility along railways has also not been considered due to their transient nature.

Based on the scale of the proposal and its location amongst other tall buildings, there is a large area in which the scheme would be visible. This includes:

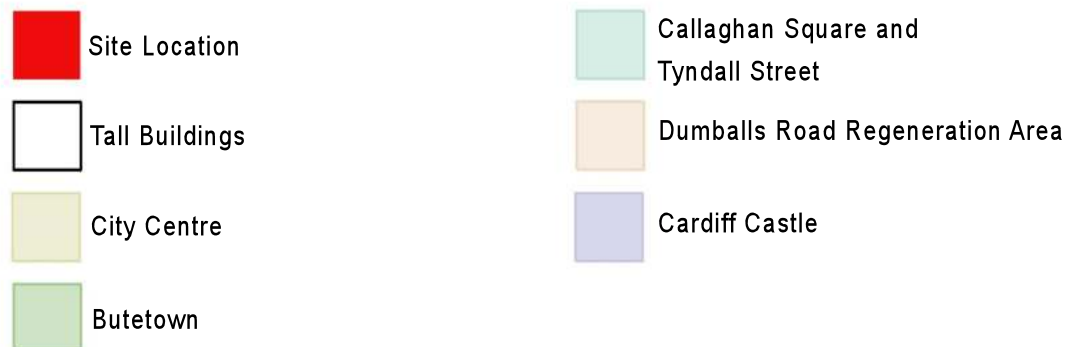
1. Callaghan Square and Dumballs Road
2. Butetown
3. Cardiff City Centre
4. Cardiff Castle

A portion is visible in Grangetown (5), however, the Dumballs Road Regeneration scheme may impact this as well as the vegetation that lines the River Taff. East Moors (6) is also impacted. However, as it is largely industrial use, there is little value to any views.





Townscape Character Areas Plan



## TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER

The site sits towards the southern end of the City Centre.

Based on the ZTV analysis, the following areas have been identified as being impacted by the proposal:

1. City Centre
2. Dumballs Road and Callaghan Square
3. Butetown
4. Cardiff Castle

These areas are highlighted in the Townscape Character Areas Plan opposite.

Alongside these, views from further afield were considered in order to determine the overall impact the proposal would have on the Cardiff skyline. The location chosen was Ocean Way due to its exposure.





View from St Davids 2



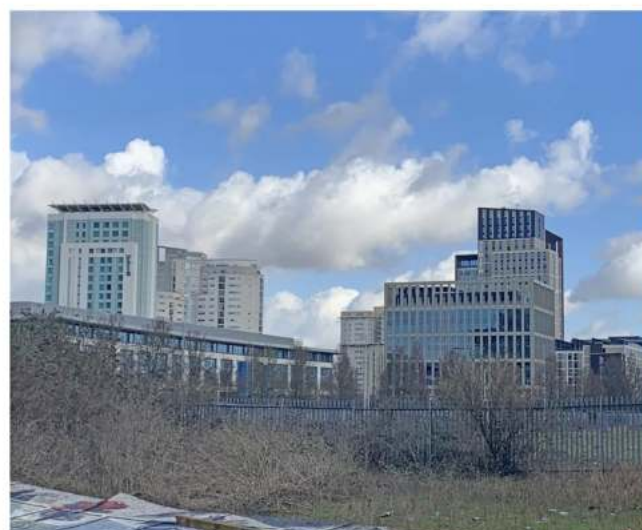
View from Bru



View from Ty Admiral



View from Utilita Arena



View from Dumballs Road



View from Callaghan Square



View from Celerity Drive



View from Tyndall Street



View from Ocean Way



View from Cardiff Castle

## BASELINE CONDITIONS

The baseline conditions have been established by a combination of desk study and fieldwork.

The desk study consisted of a review of relevant policy context that defines the townscape character.

The fieldwork recorded the character of the immediate site area to determine the impact to its visual amenity, as well as establishing several long-distance views into the City Centre, which may be impacted by the development.

Photos were taken over several days in February 2024 with clear to cloudy conditions.

There are no protected views, both local and strategic.

## Site and the Surrounding Area

The site lies between the railway and Bute Terrace. It is currently occupied by a 1970's office building atop a podium with deck parking and the former Porters club within. Both these spaces are now vacant, and demolition is imminent.

The podium is shared with the neighbouring Citrus Hotel. The podium will be demolished up to the hotel, where new ground-level parking will be provided for hotel guests and staff.

To the north of the site is Cardiff City Centre, with a mixture of tenure and building scales.

The southern aspect of the centre comprises of a 'tall building group'. This includes buildings such as Altolusso, Radisson Blu, Ty Pont Hearn, and Ty Admiral





### **Mary Ann Street**

This provides entry into St Davids 2, St Davids 2 Multi-Storey Car Park, Ty Admiral, Cineworld and the Utilita Arena. As such, it has a constant stream of vehicular and pedestrian traffic on a daily basis. In addition, it is an axial view directly into the site.

The architecture is somewhat tall, with a variety of styles and materials.

As such, it is highly susceptible to the change caused by the development. The assessment will analyse several viewpoints along the street to determine the impact.



### **Dumballs Road and Callaghan Square**

The site lies to the north-east of these locations. The area is currently in a transition period with the Central Quay development and Dumballs Road regeneration, that will provide much taller buildings. It also provides access to Cardiff Bay from the south entrance to Central Station. This leads to a high amount of vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

While from this area a large portion of the proposal will be blocked by buildings such as Altolusso, it is taller, thus it was deemed necessary to understand the impact.



### **Butetown**

Butetown lies south of the proposal and sits between the City Centre and Cardiff Bay. It is mainly comprised of low-level housing. The Dock Feeder Canal, which runs past the site, also runs through this area. Most views take place along the canal and lead either towards the bay or city centre. The tall building group is highly visible from here with the recently completed Copperworks being prominent.

The proposal will likely be partially visible behind Copperworks, as such, it is necessary to understand the impact from these viewpoints.



### **Cardiff Castle**

The castle lies north of the proposal and is a popular tourist attraction, especially the central keep. The view from the top shows most of the City Centre, including the tall building group. The top of Altolusso is clearly visible, which means that a good portion of the proposal will also be visible. It is necessary to consider the impacts of this historic view.

## **TOWNSCAPE APPRAISAL**

The townscape effects have been considered in terms of the site itself and its relationship to the wider area.

Considerations have been given to the components of good design including contextual awareness, identity, scale and built form, materiality, detailing, public realm and landscaping.

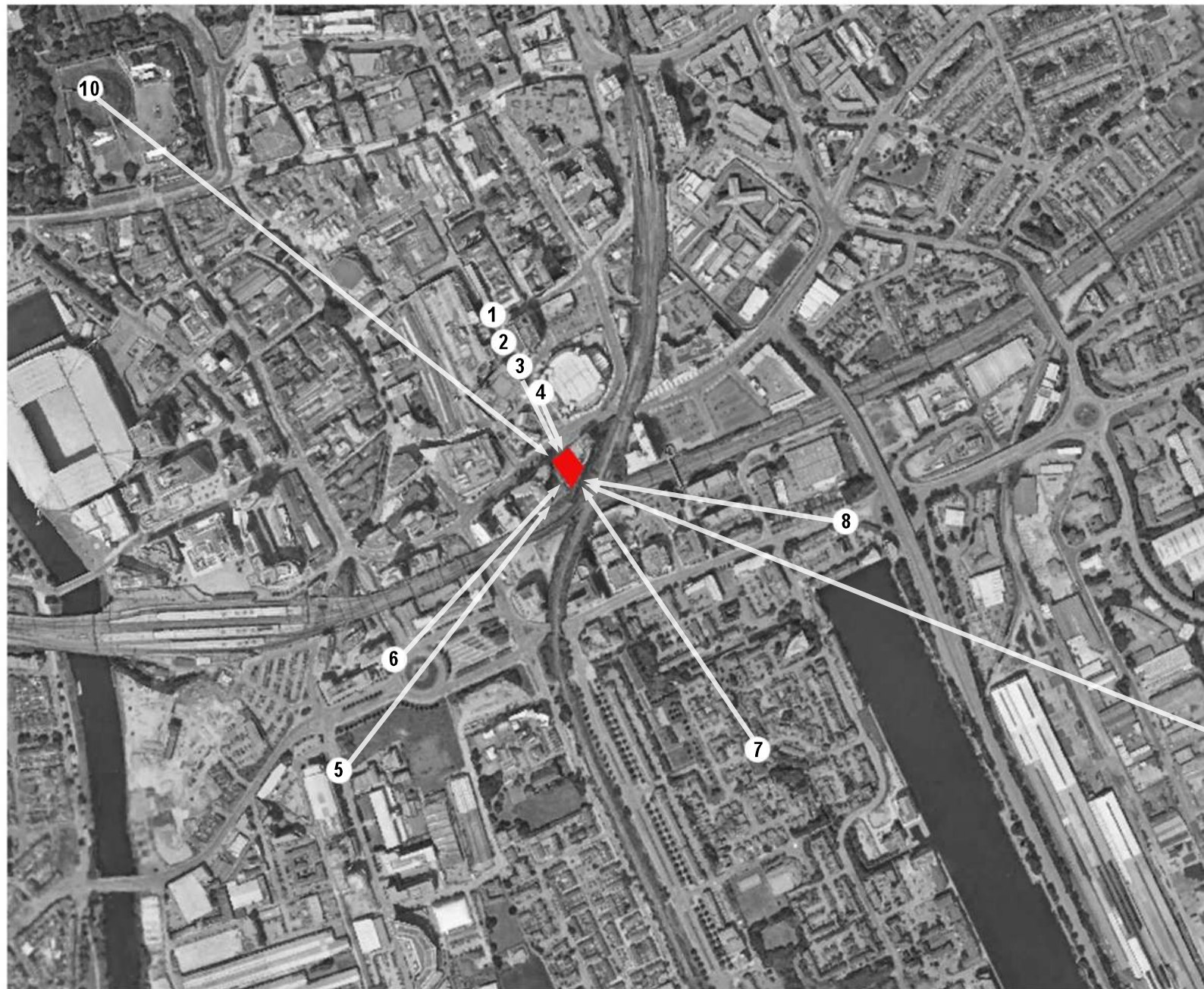
### **The Site**

The site is occupied by a stone plinth housing the former Porters Club. On top is roof level parking accessed by a ramp next to the Citrus Hotel. A 1970's office block with brown tinted curtain walling is accessed via the carpark. In its present state, the site is somewhat drab. The office block is dated in its appearance, with the concrete edge of the carpark showing visible signs of decay. It offers nothing in the way of public amenity and its scale is now out with the much taller Citrus Hotel and Altolusso on either side.

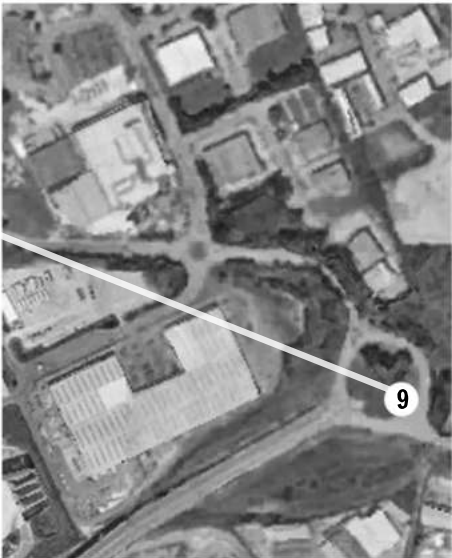
The site would benefit highly from this regeneration. The commercial unit will also bring much-needed foot traffic into the site while providing an extension to the otherwise tight public realm

The effects of the proposed development on wider townscape character is considered opposite with reference to the townscape character areas defined through the analysis of existing conditions.





View Location Plan



### VIEW LOCATION PLAN

Following the previous ZTV and Townscape Appraisal, the following areas were identified as being impacted by the proposal. These are:

1. Mary Ann Street
2. Dumballs Road
3. Callaghan Square
4. Celerity Drive
5. Tyndall Street
6. Cardiff Castle

It was also decided to look further afield to determine the proposals impact on the overall skyline of Cardiff. Ocean Way was chosen as it provides a clear view of the tall building group.

#### Close-Range Views

1. St Davids 2
2. Bru
3. Ty Admiral
4. Utilita Arena

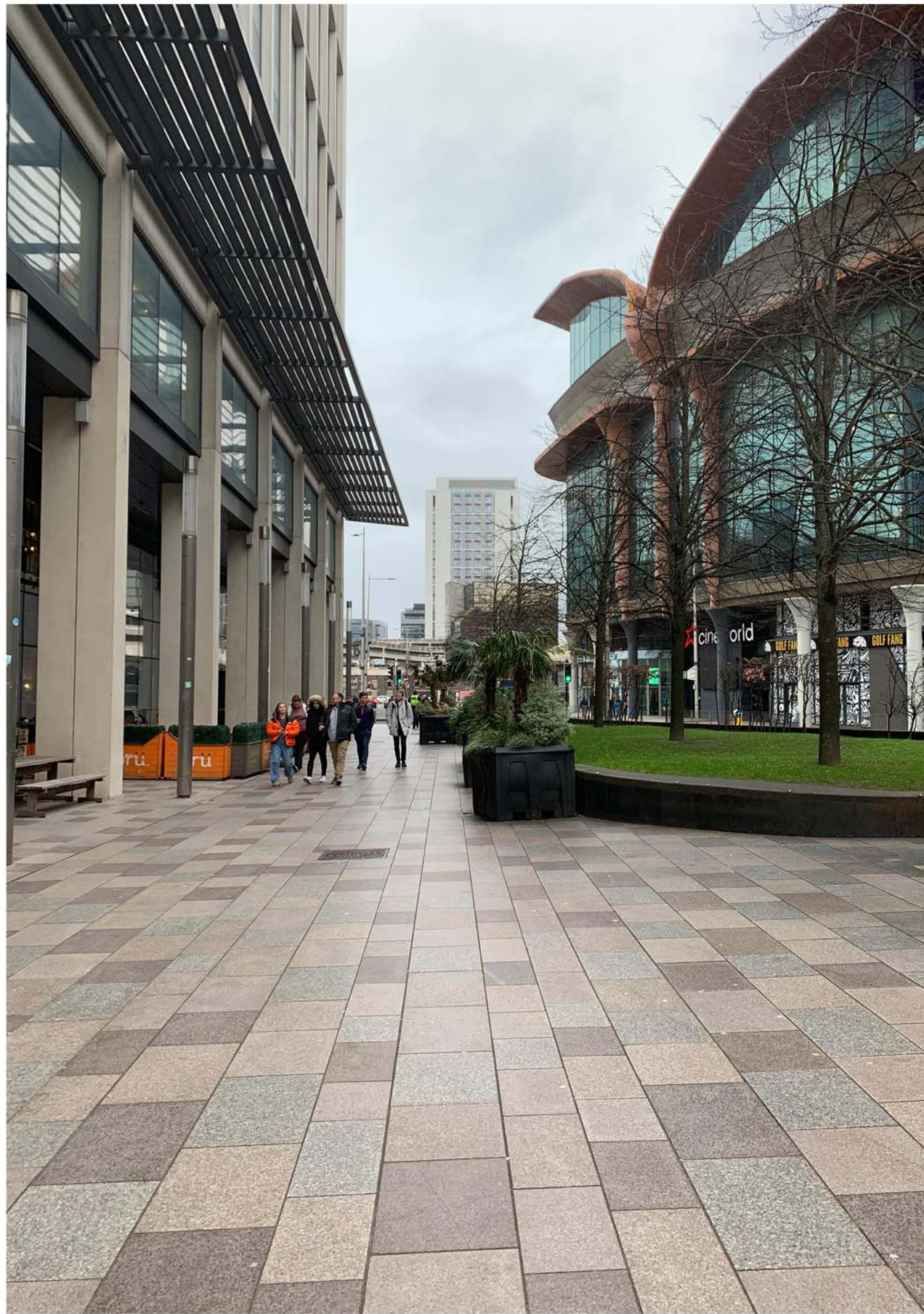
#### Medium-Range Views

5. Dumballs Road
6. Callaghan Square
7. Celerity Drive
8. Tyndall Street

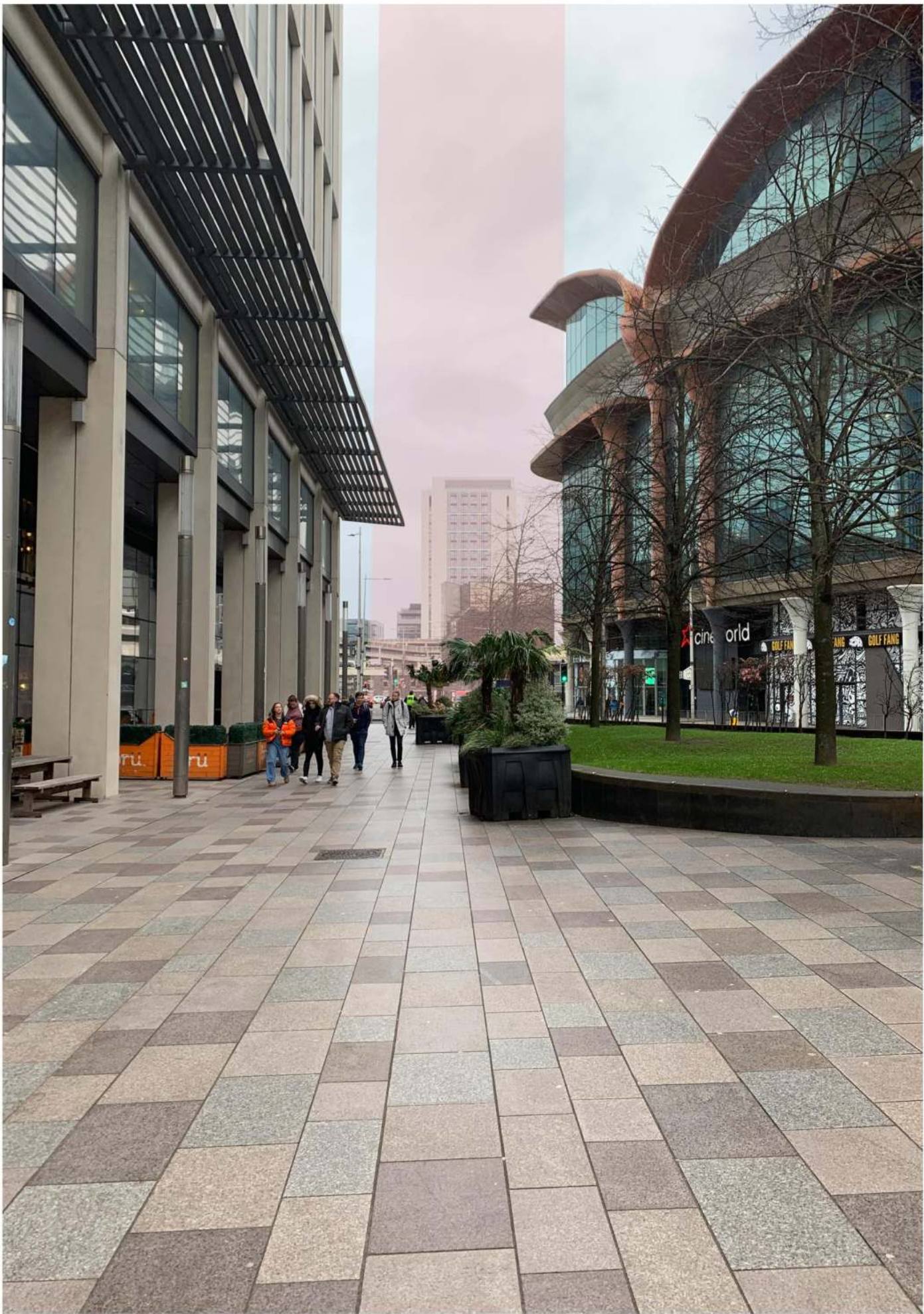
#### Long-Range Views

9. Ocean Way
10. Cardiff Castle





Existing View from the Entrance of St Davids 2



Existing View from the Entrance of St Davids 2 with Proposed 'Development Corridor'





*Proposed View from the Entrance of St Davids 2*

## ST DAVIDS 2

### Key Elements in View

Ty Admiral and Cineworld sit prominently in the foreground. At present there is a clear view to Copperworks. From the exit of the shopping centre, there is a public plaza extending around Ty Admiral.

### Receptors

Pedestrians, cyclists and drivers exiting the St Davids 2 car park or merging onto Bute Terrace.

### Value of View

Medium - Amenity is provided by the existing plaza and the design of Cineworld offers an additional focal point.

### Susceptibility

Medium - A large number of people pass through this area either commuting or recreationally. There is some focus on the plaza as this is often used as a social space.

### Visual Effect

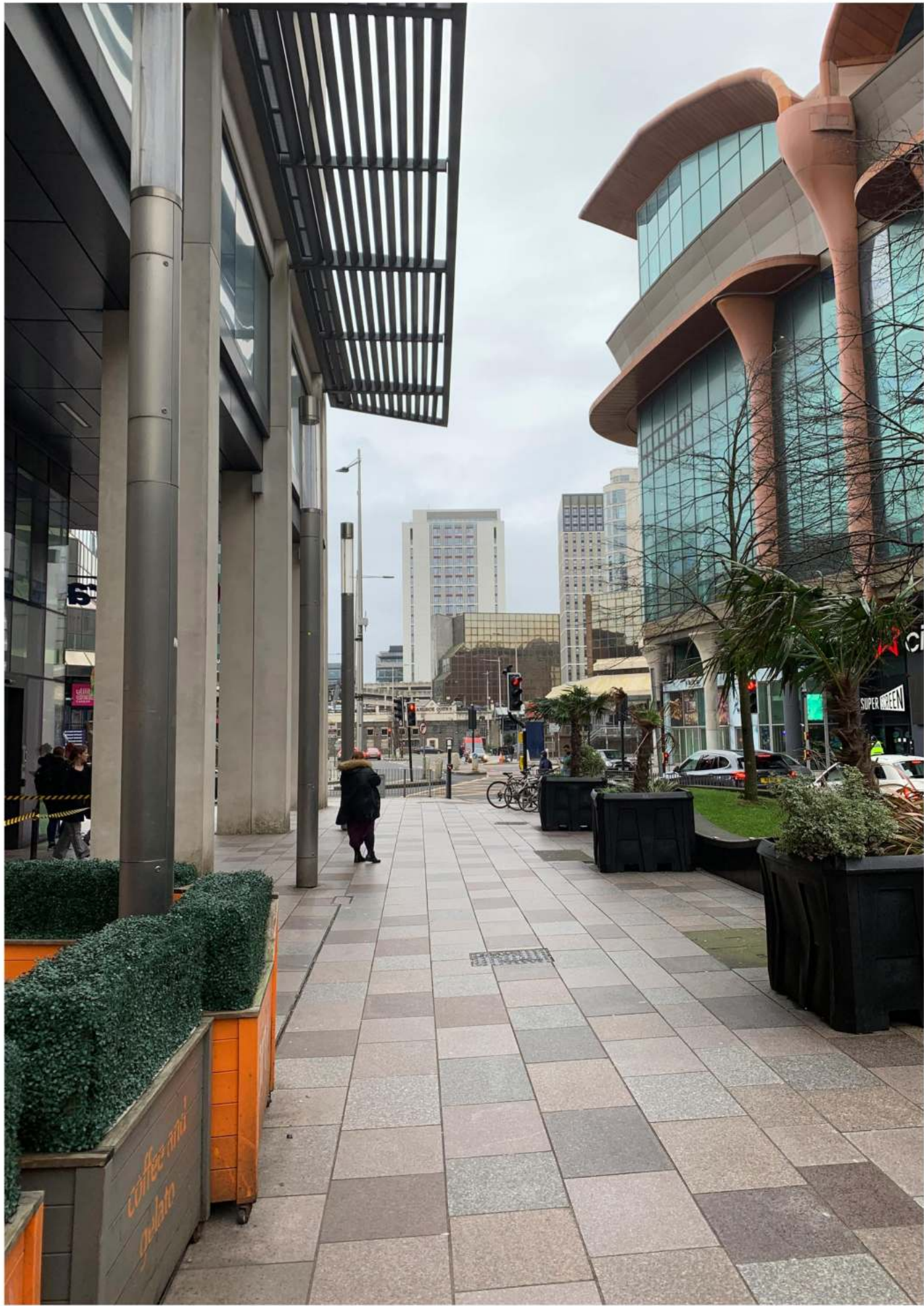
The proposal would lead to a substantial change of view for those in this area. Its layout creates a tunnel with the main outlook being the site. Copperworks will be obscured by the development.

The design provides visual interest in the varying forms and colours, with the slender gold facade taking prominence.

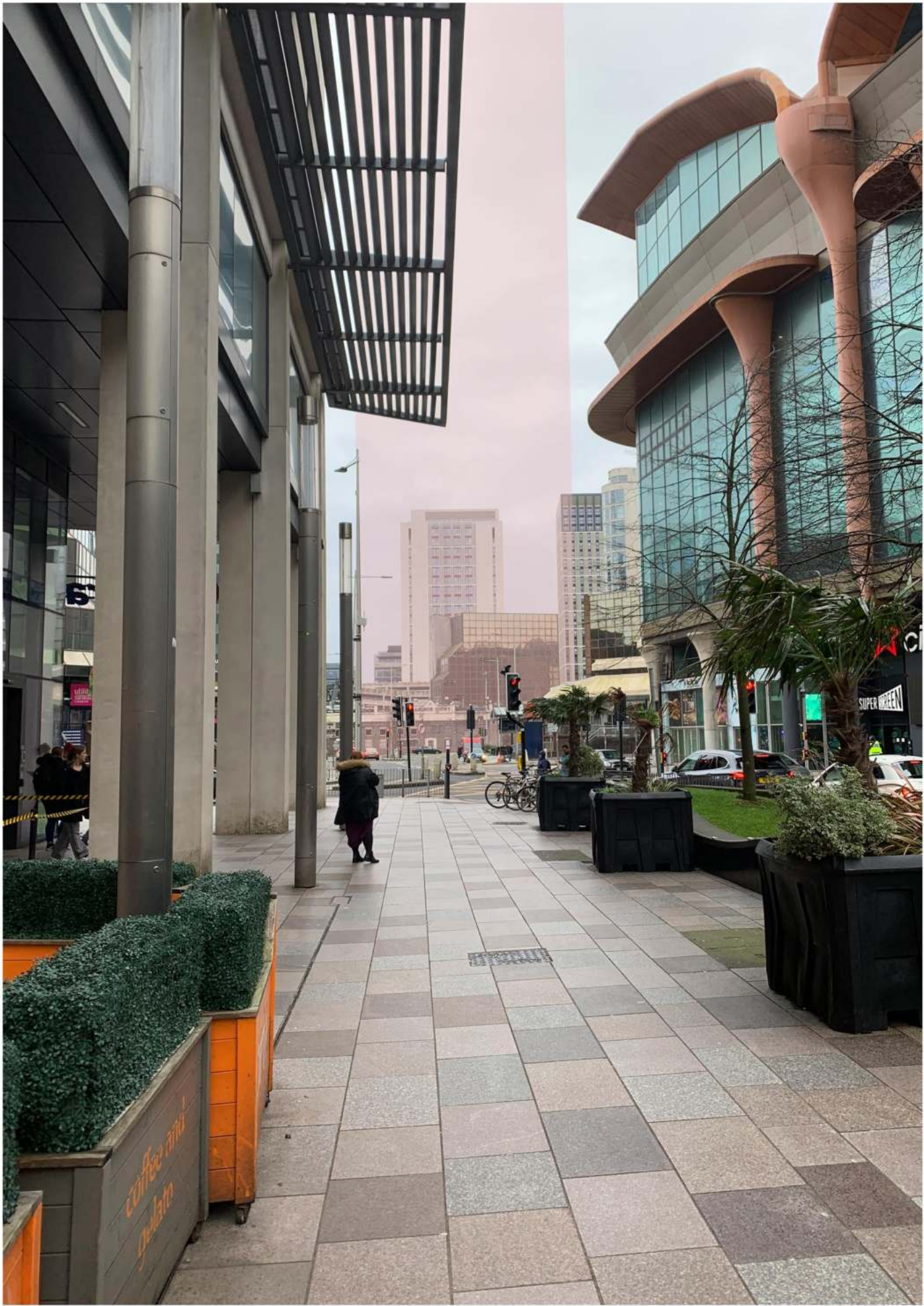
The step back allows for further interest and draws the eye up to the sharply angled spire, which contrasts with the surrounding flat roofs.

The new plaza is partially hidden, but still remains in sight, providing a more friendly approach and natural grounding of the proposal.



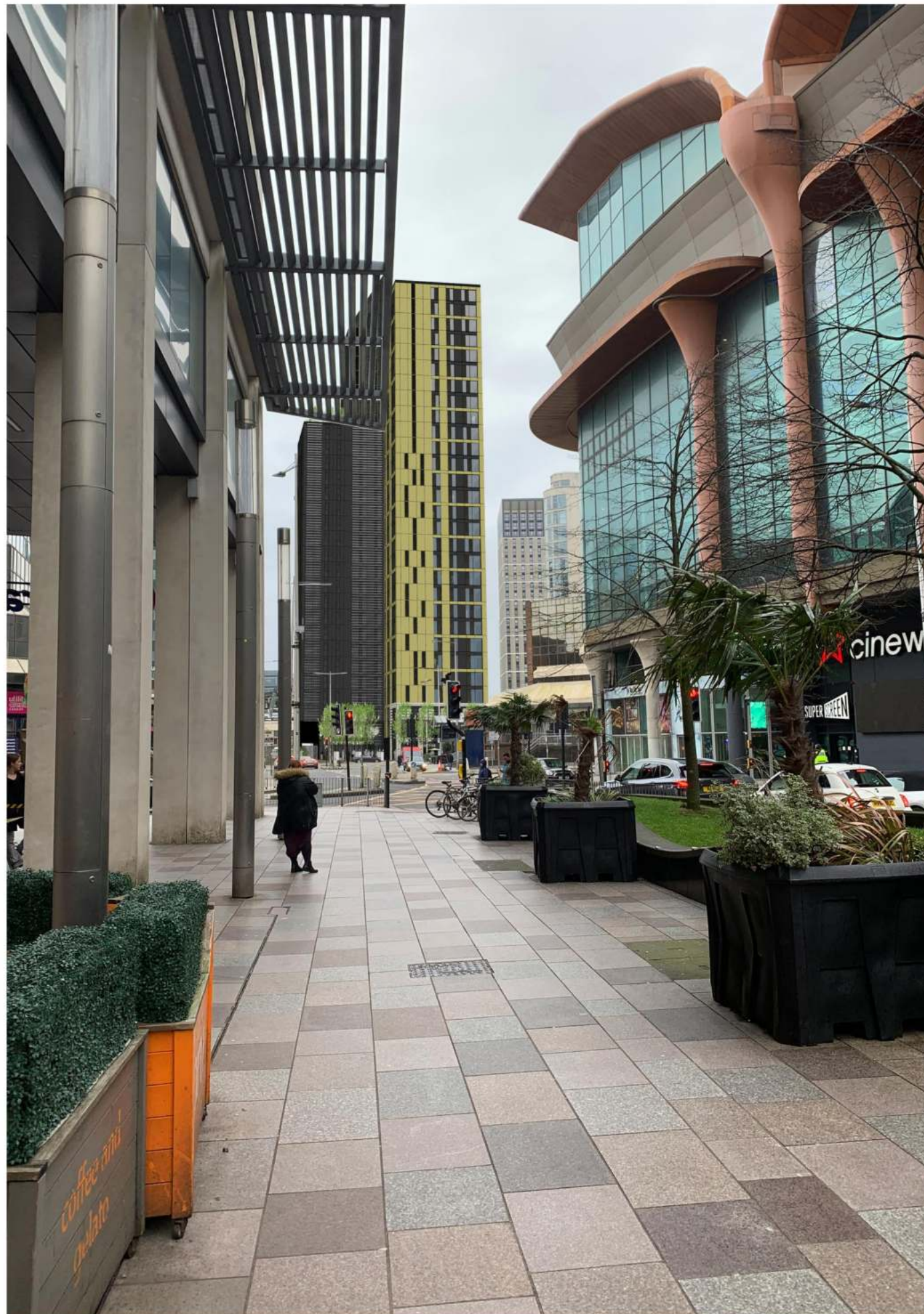


Existing View from Bru



Existing View from Bru with Proposed 'Development Corridor'





Proposed View from Bru

## BRU

### Key Elements in View

Cineworld sits prominently in the foreground, with Ty Admiral being less of an impact. The Park Inn, Altolusso and Zenith also come into view, with the tall elevation of Zenith being prominent in the background.

At present there is a clear view to Copperworks.

The public plaza extends down this way and terminates at the corner of Ty Admiral.

### Receptors

Pedestrians, cyclists and drivers exiting the St Davids 2 car park or merging onto Bute Terrace.

### Value of View

Medium - Amenity is provided by the existing plaza and the line of trees offers further amenity.

### Susceptibility

Medium - A large number of people pass through this area either commuting or recreationally. There is some outdoor seating to Bru and Stable, as such, people will be engaging in their surroundings.

### Visual Effect

The proposal would lead to a substantial change of view for those in this area. The view begins to open up and provide context for the proposal.

The forms become somewhat obscured by the brise soleil of Ty Admiral.

The step back and the detail of the horizontal silver louvres becomes more apparent.

The new plaza comes more into view, with a clearer view on the entrance to the building. The arcade and commercial unit also start to come into view.





Existing View from the Corner of Ty Admiral



Existing View from the Corner of Ty Admiral with Proposed 'Development Corridor'





*Proposed View from the Corner of Ty Admiral*

## TY ADMIRAL

### Key Elements in View

Ty Admiral and Cineworld are at the peripheral of the view. The Park Inn, Altolusso and Zenith are more prominent, with Altolusso providing a sense of scale. The Utilita Arena also comes into view.

At present there is a clear view to Copperworks.

The public plaza terminates here, with controlled crossings towards the Utilita Arena.

### Receptors

Pedestrians, cyclists and drivers exiting the St Davids 2 car park or merging onto Bute Terrace.

Patrons to the Utilita Arena and hotel guests will also be susceptible.

### Value of View

Medium to High - Amenity is provided by the expansion of the view and sightlines.

### Susceptibility

Medium - A large number of people pass through this area either commuting or recreationally. Events at the Utilita attract large crowds, with queues forming around the building. Some may engage with the surroundings.

### Visual Effect

The proposal would lead to a substantial change of view for those in this area. Altolusso provides further contextual scale and grounding.

The full form is in view, and provides interest with the varying heights. Alongside the horizontal silver louvres, vertical gold ones become prominent in the spire to provide further visual interest.

The new plaza comes more into view, with a clearer view on the entrance to the building, as does the arcade and commercial unit.





Existing View from the Corner of Utilita Arena



Existing View from the Corner of Utilita Arena with Proposed 'Development Corridor'





Proposed View from the Corner of Utilita Arena

## UTILITA ARENA

### Key Elements in View

The Park Inn and Altolusso are most prominent here. The Citrus Hotel is partially hidden by the canopy of the Utilita Arena. Bute Terrace also comes into view.

At present there is a clear view to Copperworks and Zenith.

### Receptors

Pedestrians, cyclists and drivers exiting the St Davids 2 car park or merging onto Bute Terrace.

Patrons to the Utilita Arena and hotel guests will also be susceptible.

### Value of View

Medium to High - Little visual amenity is provided at present.

### Susceptibility

Medium - A large number of people pass through this area either commuting or recreationally. The queue for events at the Arena start here, as such, people will be waiting for extended periods of time and engaging with the view.

### Visual Effect

The proposal would lead to a substantial change of view for those in this area. Altolusso becomes recessive in this view, as does the Citrus Hotel.

The public plaza, commercial unit and arcade are almost fully in view and provide much needed visual amenity as well as an expansion of the public realm.





Existing View from Dumballs Road



Existing View from Dumballs Road with Proposed 'Development Corridor'





*Proposed View from Dumballs Road*

## **DUMBALLS ROAD**

### **Key Elements in View**

The Radisson Blu, Altolusso, John Street and Zenith are largely prominent. Callaghan Square is partially obscured by the line of trees.

### **Receptors**

Pedestrians, cyclists and drivers travelling along Dumballs Road. Workers in neighbouring offices. Students in Zenith.

### **Value of View**

Medium - Some visual amenity is provided by Callaghan Square and the open nature of the view.

### **Susceptibility**

Medium - A large number of people pass through this area either commuting into the centre or recreationally towards Cardiff Bay. The redevelopment will introduce a large number of residents to the area.

### **Visual Effect**

The proposal would lead to some change in the character of the area. It is largely obscured by Altolusso and the surrounding buildings provide a balance of scale. The grid on the facade echoes that of John Street and Radisson Blu. The curtain walling features a random arrangement of solid, window and louvres, which add further depth and visual interest.





Existing View from Callaghan Square



Existing View from Callaghan Square with Proposed 'Development Corridor'





*Proposed View from Callaghan Square*

## CALLAGHAN SQUARE

### Key Elements in View

No. 2 Callaghan Square is largely prominent in this view, with the Radisson Blu and Altolusso forming the background. John Street is in the peripheral.

### Receptors

Pedestrians, cyclists and drivers travelling along Dumballs Road and Penarth Road. Workers in neighbouring offices. Students in Zenith.

### Value of View

Medium - Visual amenity is provided by Callaghan Square and the open nature of the view.

### Susceptibility

Medium - A large number of people pass through this area either commuting or recreationally, with Callaghan Square being a popular recreational spot.

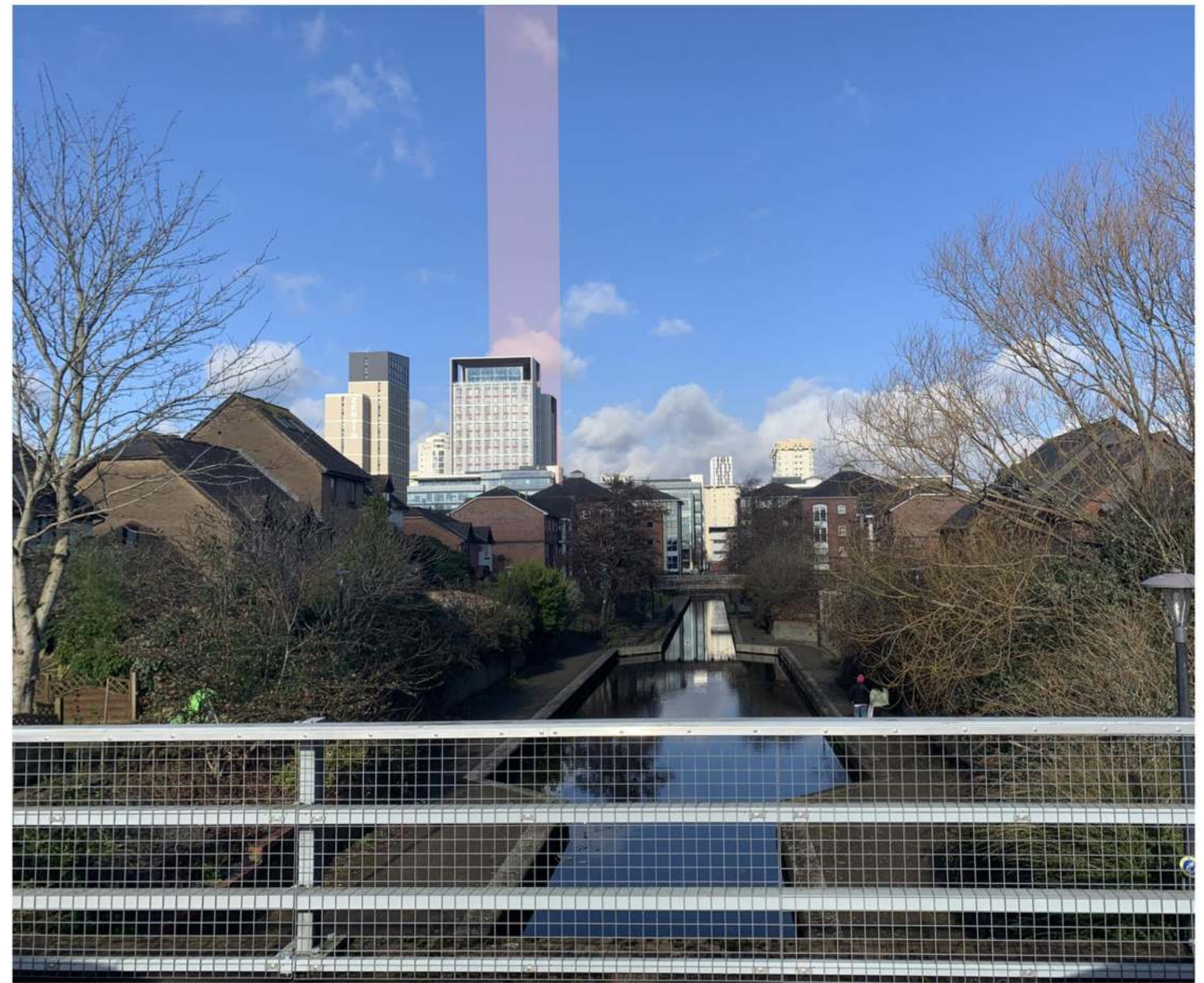
### Visual Effect

The proposal would lead to some change in the character of the area. It is largely obscured by Altolusso, with only the topmost floors being visible. The random pattern in the curtain walling does become more prominent to provide interest and variety.





Existing View from Celerity Drive



Existing View from Celerity Drive with Proposed 'Development Corridor'





*Proposed View from Celerity Drive*

## CELERITY DRIVE

### Key Elements in View

The view is largely driven by the Dock Feeder Canal running north towards the centre. The surrounding area has been built up around this.

The tall building group forms the background with Copperworks and Zenith being most prominent. Altolusso, Ty Pont Haearn and Bridge Street Exchange sit further back.

### Receptors

Pedestrians, cyclists and residents.

### Value of View

Medium - Visual amenity is provided by the Dock Feeder Canal and surrounding vegetation.

### Susceptibility

Medium - A large number of people permanently reside in the area, with a transient student population. There are also some who commute through.

### Visual Effect

The proposal would lead to minimal change to the view as it is obscured by Copperworks. A small portion of the 'shoulder' can be seen, however the colour of the cladding makes it visually recessive.





Existing View from Tyndall Street



Existing View from Tyndall Street with Proposed 'Development Corridor'





*Proposed View from Tyndall Street*

## TYNDALL STREET

### Key Elements in View

The view is made up of a large number of elements. The foreground consists of low-rise housing along Tyndall Street, with a taller apartment building opposite. Set back is Lumis Student Living and Ty Pont Haeearn.

Copperworks, Altolusso and Ty Admiral are also visible.

### Receptors

Pedestrians, cyclists, drivers and residents.

### Value of View

Medium - Visual amenity is provided by the variety of built forms and interstitial trees,

### Susceptibility

Medium - Tyndall Street forms a vital link into the City Centre, with a large number of commuters using it daily. There are also permanent residents housing as well as several student accommodation schemes.

### Visual Effect

The proposal would lead to a change of the character. The building is rather prominent, although provides visual interest with the variety of forms. The spire and vertical gold louvres are also prominent and provide a focal point.

Also situated at high-level are 2 external terraces which provide amenity space to residents.

These also serve to reduce the scale of the building higher up and to reduce its potential for overbearing.





Existing View from Ocean Way Roundabout



Existing View from Ocean Way Roundabout with Proposed 'Development Corridor'





*Proposed View from Ocean Way Roundabout*

## OCEAN WAY ROUNDABOUT

### Key Elements in View

The view is made up of a several elements. The East Moors Industrial Estate is in the foreground. A line of trees separates this from the City Centre where some of the tall building group is prominent. This includes Copperworks, Altolusso, Ty Pont Hearn, Ty Admiral and Bridge Street Exchange.

### Receptors

Drivers with occasional cyclists and pedestrians travelling along Ocean Way and Cardiff Bay Link Road.

### Value of View

Medium - Visual amenity is provided by the variety of built forms and interstitial trees.

### Susceptibility

Low - Those who experience the view will be mostly drivers or commuters. As such, they will be mainly focused on their journeys and not the view.

### Visual Effect

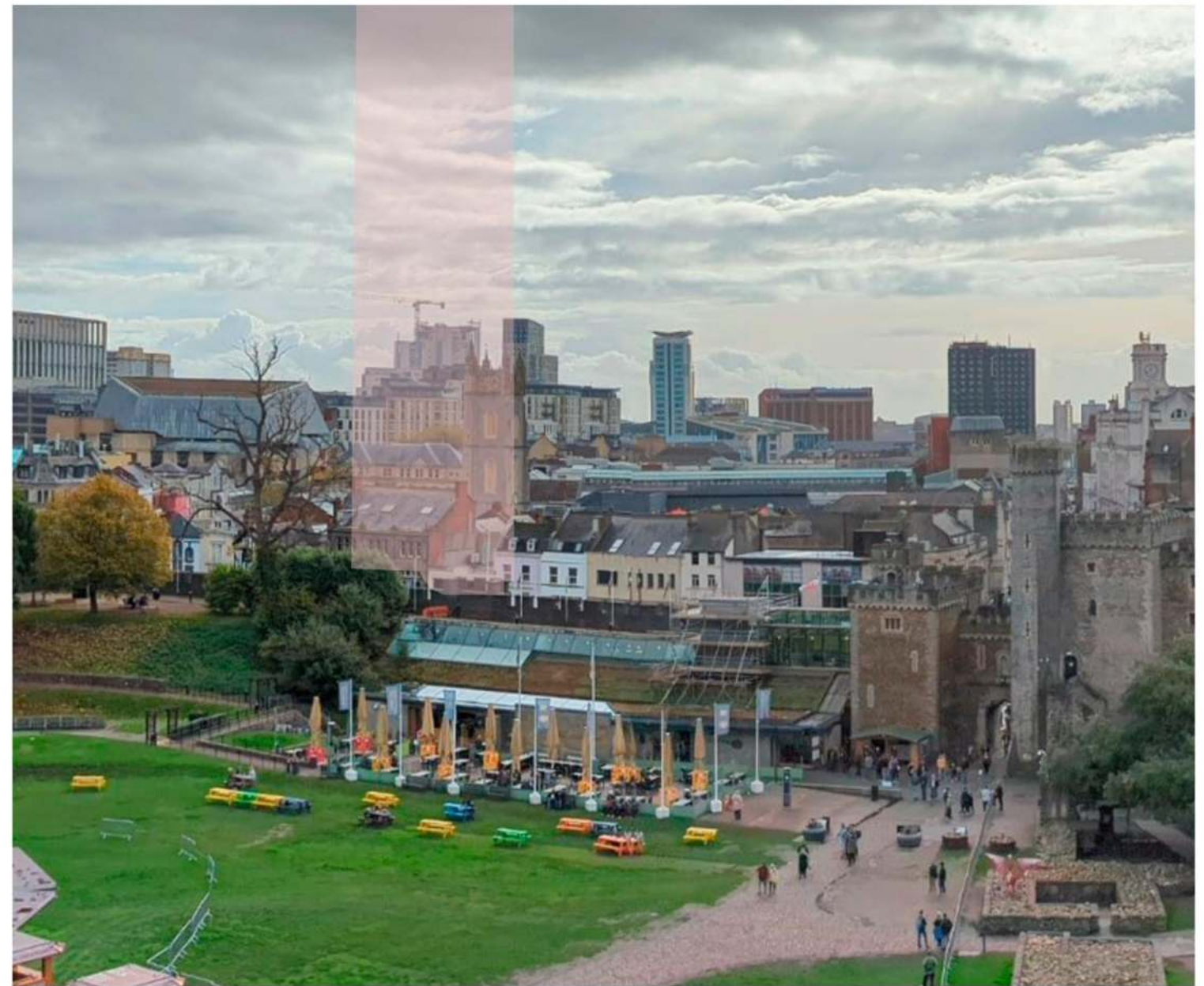
The proposal would lead to a change of the character. The building is rather prominent, although provides visual interest with the variety of forms and colours of cladding.

The roof terraces are visible from this distance and serve to provide further visual amenity.





Existing View from Cardiff Castle



Existing View from Cardiff Castle with Proposed 'Development Corridor'





*Proposed View from Cardiff Castle*

## CARDIFF CASTLE

### Key Elements in View

The view is a prominent one being atop the 12th century keep. It offers an expansive view over the City Centre.

The foreground is made up of the castle and its grounds, with Castle Street running behind the wall.

St John The Baptist City Parish Church is also prominent in this view. Beyond this is mostly the roofs of the shops and arcades of the centre, as well as the clock tower of Hodge House.

Some of the tall building group is visible including Ty Admiral, Ty Pont Haearn, Altolusso, Zenith, Radisson Blu and Premier Inn Cardiff City Centre.

### Receptors

Tourists and residents.

### Value of View

High - Visual amenity is provided by the view of the grounds as well as the view of the centre.

### Susceptibility

High - Those who experience the view will be mostly tourists visiting the castle on a daily basis. Occasional staff will also experience the view.

### Visual Effect

The proposal would lead to a change of the character and impact the skyline from this point. The darker clad lower portions are visually recessive and reduce the impact. The slender form of the taller block also aids in this.

One of the roof terraces is also visible which provides further visual interest to the proposal.

The stepped form matches that of Altolusso providing a visual common ground and familiarity, while the grid of the openings ties into Ty Admiral and Radisson Blu.



## CONCLUSION

This TVIA has been prepared to consider the townscape and visual effects arising from the application scheme. The report has been informed by the relevant planning context, best practice guidance, current townscape character assessments and heritage designations relevant to the consideration of townscape and visual matters.

### Townscape Effects

Based on the assessment, the proposal would provide a positive impact to the townscape and the overall visual effect.

The proposed development replaces a run-down and dated building in a prominent location along Bute Terrace with no contribution towards the public realm.

While taller than neighbouring buildings, the proposal does not tower over them and remains proportional to the context.

The creation of a new plaza provides an extension of the public realm while landscaping serves to soften this part of the City Centre.

### Visual Effects

There have been no adverse visual effects identified. The axial view along Mary Ann Street would benefit from the proposal given the existing buildings dated and tired appearance.

Locations such as Callaghan Square, Dumballs Road and Tyndall Street would see minimal impact from the topmost floors being visible. The design of a grid like facade with randomised elements adds variety and interest to these views.

From further vantage points such as Ocean Way and Cardiff Castle, the proposal adds further variety to the skyline of Cardiff with the variety of heights and forms. The tallest element (30 storeys) provides further variety with its sharply angled roof.

It is also seen in the context of other tall buildings in Cardiff, providing balance and scale.