

# Design and Access Statement

for the redevelopment of:

THE GAIETY

195 - 197 City Road, Cardiff

for:

WDQR Apartments

September 2024

Prepared by: **HolderMathias**architects

On Behalf of: **DRAYCOTT GROUP**

# Contents

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

## 2.0 BRIEFING

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Residential
- 2.3 Commercial
- 2.4 Servicing, Plant and Refuse
- 2.5 Car Parking and Cycle Storage

## 3.0 SITE CONTEXT

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Site Location
- 3.3 Site Area and Topography
- 3.4 Land Use
- 3.5 Access and Movement
- 3.6 Boundaries
- 3.7 Existing Buildings
- 3.8 Archaeology
- 3.9 Ecology
- 3.10 Flooding
- 3.11 Local Amenities
- 3.12 Public Transport

## 4.0 CONCEPT DESIGN

- 4.1 The Vision
- 4.2 Site and Design Considerations
- 4.3 The Concept
- 4.4 Design Principles
- 4.5 Design Evolution
- 4.6 Site Plan
- 4.7 Planning
- 4.8 Highways
- 4.9 Levels

## 5.0 RESPONSE TO OBJECTIVES OF GOOD DESIGN

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Movement and Access
- 5.3 Public Transport
- 5.4 Cycling
- 5.5 Pedestrians
- 5.6 Car Parking
- 5.7 Inclusive Access
- 5.8 Emergency Access
- 5.9 Character
  - Amount
  - Layout
  - WDQR Plans
  - Scale
  - Appearance
- 5.10 Landscaping
- 5.11 Environmental Sustainability
- 5.12 Neighbourly Issues
- 5.14 Refuse
- 5.15 Community Safety

## 6.0 PLANNING

- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Relevant Planning Policy Framework
- 6.3 Commentary

## 7.0 SUMMARY



The Gaiety building (site), as existing, viewed from the opposite side of City Road - image courtesy of the internet



# 1.0 Introduction



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Design and Access Statement (DAaS) has been prepared on behalf of the Draycott Group in support of a planning application for the redevelopment of the existing Gaiety building site at 195 - 197 City Road, Cardiff, for new WDQR compliant affordable homes and commercial unit(s), to include associated internal and external amenity spaces, secure cycle storage and typology related front and back-of-house management and service spaces.

1.2 Like many cities across the UK, Cardiff is experiencing an acute housing crisis. Recently reported figures suggest that there are currently over 8,200 households on the Cardiff Social Housing Waiting list, all in need of good quality affordable housing in well-connected, sustainable locations across the city. With the help of the various Housing Associations that manage and deliver new and refurbished homes across south Wales, Cardiff’s ambitious plans to address this housing need, can begin to be delivered. Moreover, with a reported circa 1,500 households currently in temporary and supported accommodation with a further 350 or so households on a waiting list to enter temporary accommodation, to avoid yet more homelessness, it is now more important than ever to deliver the kind of new homes that are clearly needed.

1.3 The Gaiety building, at the northern end of City Road, on the corner of Northcote Street Lane, is a redundant leisure / performance venue that has been left for many years to fall into disrepair - it has become a local eyesore - that offers an ideal site for the development of new affordable housing. It should be noted that the building has been stripped of all mechanical and electrical services and its fabric has become engulfed in vegetation, all of which have rendered it economically unviable for refurbishment - indeed, it has a recent ‘consent’ for demolition.

1.4 The Wales and West Housing Association, through, and in close liaison with, the Draycott Group (as turn-key developer) have expressed a keen desire to include the Gaiety within its current portfolio of properties. Furthermore, they have identified a specific need for upwards of 70 primarily 1-bedroom apartment units within the environs of the northern end of City Road.

1.5 Once demolished, the resulting Gaiety site offers an excellent opportunity for the development of a new, and much needed, affordable housing apartment building with City Road facing ground floor ‘active’ frontage space

appropriate for a variety of commercial and / or internal resident amenity or management office use(s).

1.6 Recent new developments, post war redevelopments and contemporary interventions, often within and adjacent to historic conservation areas, have all given Cardiff an increasingly eclectic urban fabric - eclectic in both scale and materiality - and hence a unique architectural character - City Road is perhaps the epitome of this character.

1.7 The proposals seek consent for a new 3 to 8 storey development of WDQR compliant Housing Association affordable residential accommodation, comprising: 66 x 1-bedroom apartment units (94%) and 4 x 2-bedroom apartment units (6%), and directly related resident amenity space(s); a private internal open landscaped courtyard; ground floor commercial unit(s) (Class A1 or A2 or A3); all associated front and back-of-house service spaces; secure resident cycle storage; and a re-located sub-station. The proposals are intended to compliment the continued regeneration (and renaissance) of City Road in general as well as the application site’s immediate context, and, through interpretation and responsive contemporary design, not only remain true to the eclectic character of City Road, but add a ‘fresh’ new dimension to the street scene and townscape at its northern end.

1.8 The purpose of this DaAS is to provide a clear and logical reference document that, when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings and the other associated reports (by others), can inform the planning process in relation to current and relevant policy.

1.9 The DaAS responds to the requirements of local design policy and the Welsh Government’s Technical Advice Note 12: Design (March 2016). As such, it will endeavour to explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposals as well as the way in which they respond to the objectives of good design in relation to: accessibility and movement (to, from and within the building); character (in respect to amount, layout, scale, appearance and materiality); landscaping; community safety; and, environmental sustainability.

1.10 Pre–planning application advice has been sought from Cardiff Council during the early stages of the project’s design development, many aspects of which are embedded within the proposals presented here.



# 2.0 Briefing

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

2.1.1 The new building for the redevelopment of the Gaiety site should be considered in the context of the continuing regeneration (and renaissance) of the northern end of City Road, and acknowledge, in particular, the immediately adjacent (to the north) City Heights student residential studio unit development. With reference to the plethora of current affordable housing buildings and projects that are emerging across city centre in general, it should be considered in the context of the continuing demand for high quality affordable homes in prime city centre locations, close to public transport networks. The new development should, where appropriate, include: a variety of associated internal and external amenity spaces; services support accommodation; and, through a degree of ‘active’ street frontage, some commercial space. Furthermore, the applicant’s inherent desire to provide high quality public facilities and services within interesting environments that also offer opportunities for immediately adjacent high quality public realm, should also be exploited along the City Road frontage.

## 2.2 RESIDENTIAL

2.2.1 The residential component(s) of the new Gaiety building should be considered as a primary ‘wing’ of accommodation that will offer a positive and worthwhile (active) contribution to City Road’s urban frontage as well as its townscape and street scene, and a secondary ‘wing’ that will offer positive urban frontage to the return into Northcote Road Lane (north).

2.2.2 Each side of the new development should respond, and contribute to: its orientation; its immediate context; and its boundary condition(s), as well as, in particular, the corner between City Road and Northcote Road Lane (north) - this should be, not only emphasised as a potential urban ‘pause point’ and ‘gateway’ in combination with the adjacent City Heights building, but should be considered as the location for additional height and architectural definition.

2.2.3 The two ‘wings’ should be connected by a main vertical circulation core, which in turn should be legibly connected to the main entrance foyer. The accommodation mix should, as far as possible, comprise exclusively 1-bedroom apartment units, with the inclusion of a small number of 2-bedroom apartment units where the evolving design may require. Based on the Welsh Government’s “Acceptable Cost / On-Cost for Use with Social Housing Grant Funded Housing in Wales” (June 2023) document, together with the requirements of the Welsh Development Quality

Requirements (WDQR) 2021, incorporating “Lifetime Homes”, the combined wings and blocks of accommodation should endeavour to provide apartment units with the following internal (target) areas, as follows:

- 1-bedroom units @ 50 sqm
- 2-bedroom units @ 65 sqm

The apartments should also follow, as far as possible, recognised internal WDQR layouts and configurations.

2.2.4 The new building’s height(s), scale and massing, should make reference to the recent developments in City Road generally, but more particularly, to the adjacent (to the north) City Heights building.

2.2.5 Where appropriate, a variety of private resident amenity spaces for internal and external use should be considered as part of the new development to include an accessible, appropriately orientated, central landscaped courtyard, for leisure pursuits and social congregation.

## 2.3 COMMERCIAL

2.3.1 The new development should enable the inclusion of a commercial component with a footprint of circa 150sqm. The space should be easily divisible into smaller spaces or units if required.

## 2.4 SERVICING, PLANT AND REFUSE

2.4.1 Consideration should be given to moving the existing electrical sub-station from the south west corner of the site.

2.4.2 A residential refuse store to Cardiff Council collection standards and recommendations should be provided within the body of the new building that can be easily accessed by residents. Similarly, a dedicated refuse store or area should be incorporated for the benefit of the users of the commercial space.

2.4.3 In conjunction with the potential to widen Northcote Street Lane (north), consideration should be given to the proximity of the new building’s refuse store relative to City Road and whether service vehicles can easily either reverse into Northcote Street Lane (north) or use the junction with City Road as a form of (temporary) layby.

2.4.4 The need for water storage for both the residential and the commercial accommodation will need to be considered and, if possible, should be located outside the general footprint of the building.

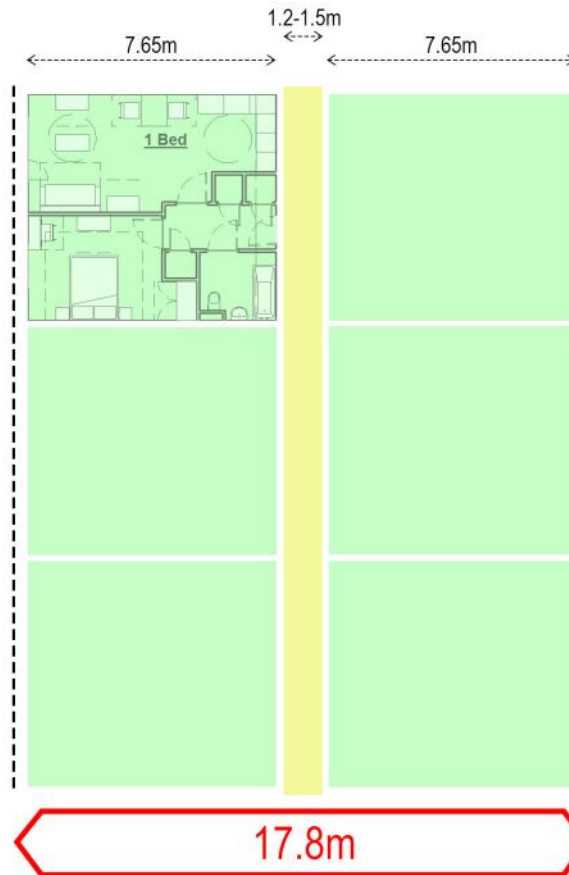
2.4.5 Servicing spaces such as the switch and transformer rooms should be considered in relation to their particular access requirements from either within the building or from the public realm. These spaces should be considered as an integral aspect of the building’s architectural composition.

2.4.6 The development of the new building will require net zero carbon off-sets, as such, consideration should be given to the provision of photo-voltaic panels to as much of the roofscape as practicable.

## 2.5 CAR PARKING AND CYCLE STORAGE

2.5.1 There is no specific requirement for car parking associated with the new development.

2.5.2 A secure cycle store should be provided as part of either the internal back-of-house accommodation or within a ‘standard’ externally located cycle rack / enclosure, with easy access and egress for residents. The number of cycles should make reference to Cardiff Council standards and recommendations, ie 1 cycle stand per bedroom.



The width of a block ‘wing’ is generated by the combination of typical recognised 1-bedroom apartment internal WDQR layout and configuration set either side of a 1200mm clear central communicating corridor.







## THE BRIEF

*Redevelopment of:*

**The Gaiety**

Pre-Application Consultation

August 2024

Aerial view of The Gaiety site looking north west



3.0 Site Location and Context



Site Location and Context Plan

SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT

Redevelopment of:  
  
The Gaiety  
  
Pre-Application Consultation  
  
August 2024

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1 Understanding the nature of the application site and the opportunities and constraints that it presents, provides an important foundation upon which the proposed development has been established. This section of the DaAS sets out the analysis of the site and its immediate context, and how it has been used to inform the design of the application proposals.

3.2 SITE LOCATION

3.2.1 The application site is located at the northern end of City Road, on its west side, on the outskirts of Cardiff city centre at the junction with Northcote Street Lane (north), a narrow access lane that leads to Northcote Street Lane (west) which in turn runs parallel to City Road and provides access to garages and similar storage structures associated with properties on both City Road and Richmond Road.



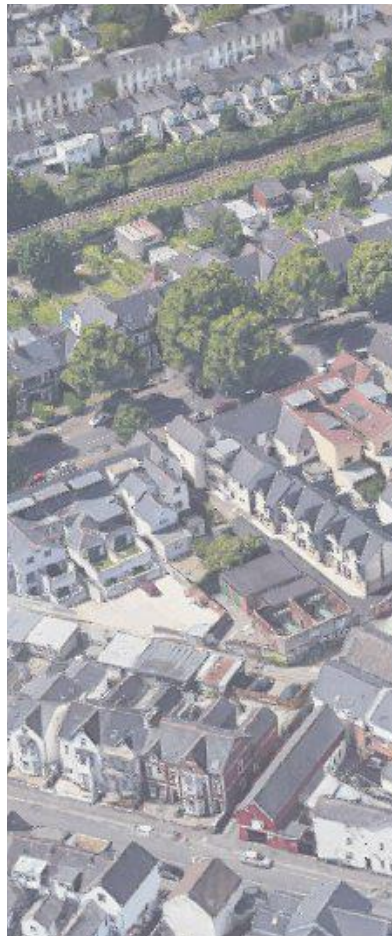
The Gaiety site looking south from the junction between City Road and Strathnairn Street



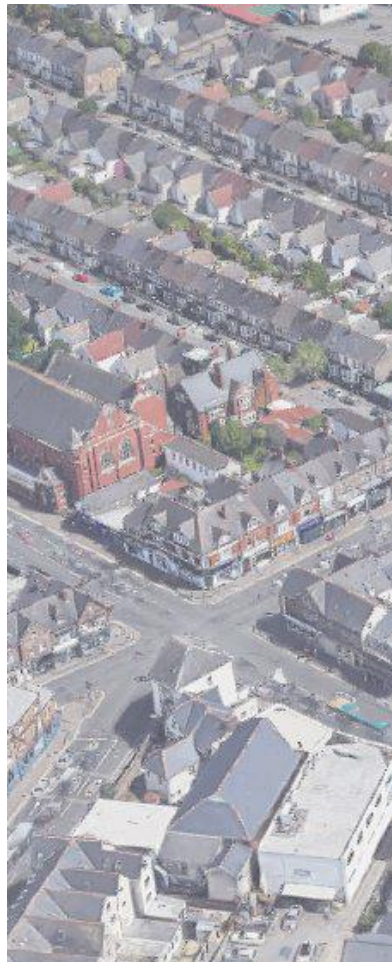
The Gaiety site looking north from the junction between City Road and Keppoch Street



The Gaiety site viewed from City Road



Aerial view of The Gaiety site looking south

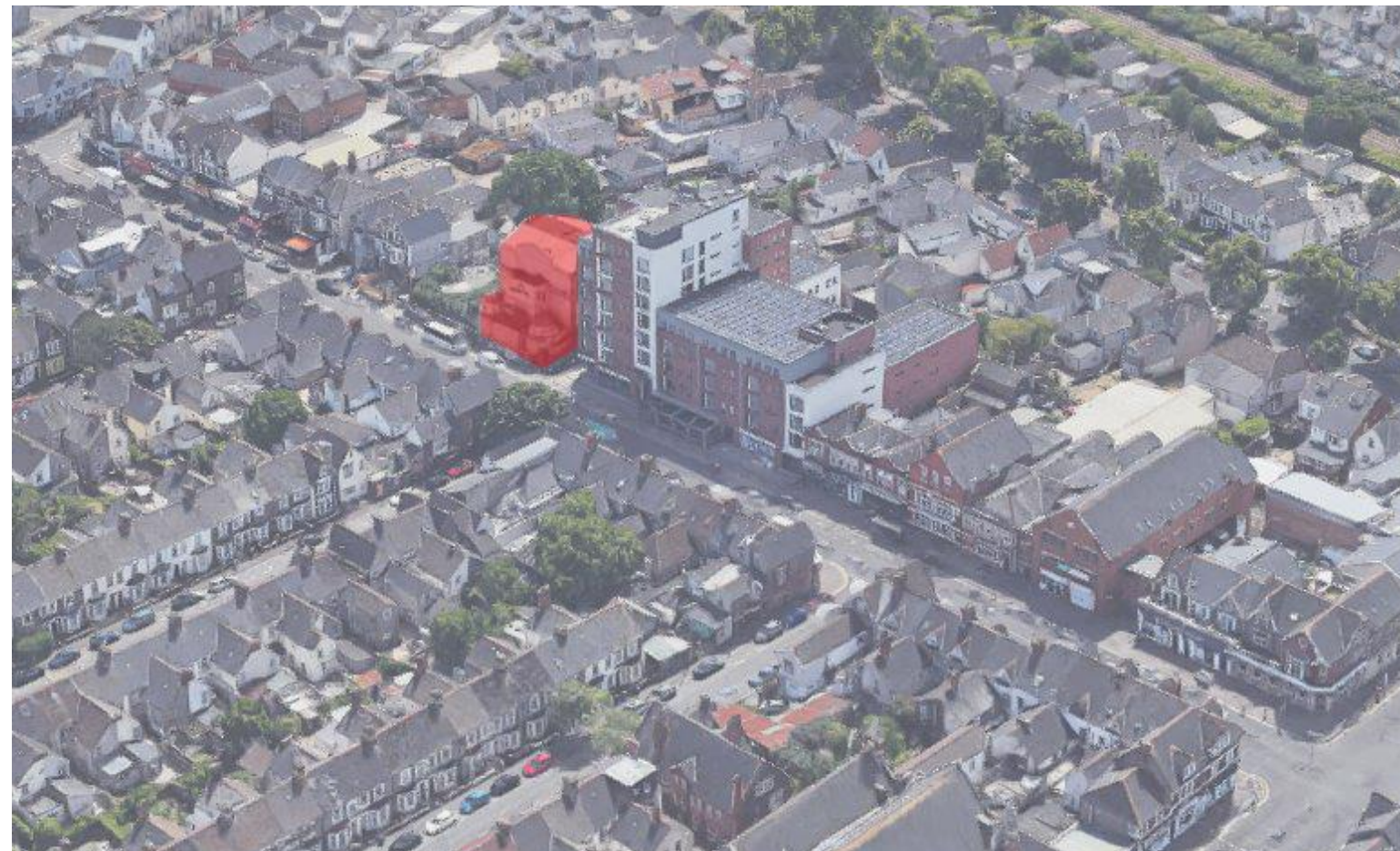


Aerial view of The Gaiety site looking north





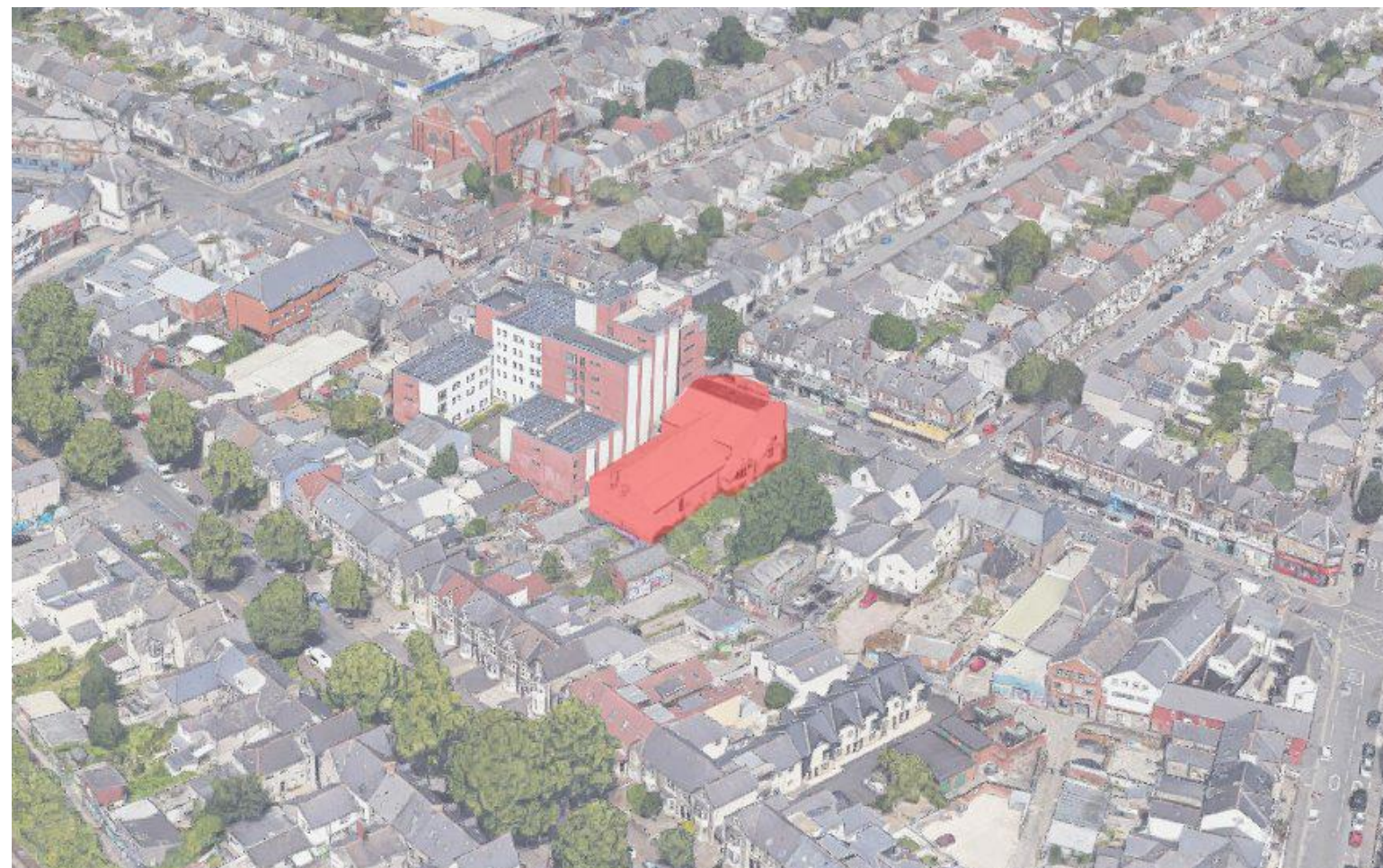
g north west



Aerial view of The Gaiety site looking south west



g south east



Aerial view of The Gaiety site looking north east

## SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT

*Redevelopment of:*

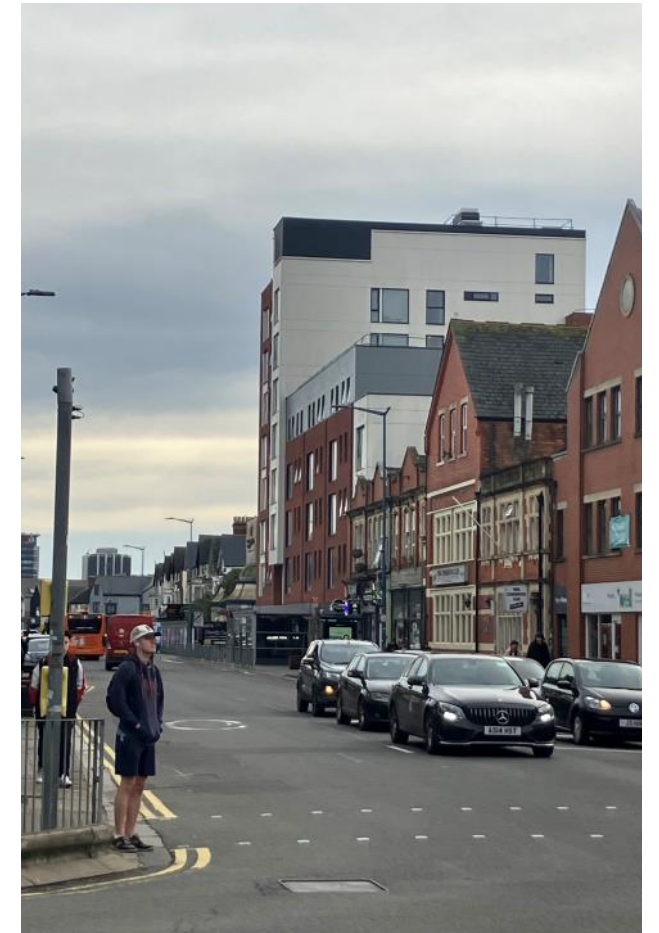
**The Gaiety**

Pre-Application Consultation

August 2024



# Site Location and Context



Serial views of The Gaiety site (behind the City Heights development to the south) looking south from top to the bottom of Macintosh Place and across to the northern end of City Road



Serial views of The Gaiety site looking north from the southern approach along City Road

## SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT

Redevelopment of:

The Gaiety

Pre-Application Consultation

August 2024





Serial views of The Gaiety site (immediately to the left of the City Heights development - straight ahead) looking west down Glenroy Street towards City Road



Serial views of The Gaiety site (obscured by the terraced housing on the right in the left hand photograph and becoming increasingly more visible in the right hand photograph ) looking west down Keppoch Street towards City Road

SITE LOCATION  
AND CONTEXT

Redevelopment of:

**The Gaiety**

Pre-Application Consultation

August 2024



# 3.0 Site Location and Context

3.2.2 The application site is also immediately adjacent to the 8/9-storey City Heights student residential studio apartment accommodation building (to the north), which was completed in 2019, and, further to the north, again on the west side of City Road, the Park Conservative Club and Co-operative Pharmacy buildings. Together with the (existing) Gaiety building itself, this group of buildings represent the largest buildings in the immediate area. To the south, immediately adjacent to the application site's southern boundary is a 3-storey semi-detached property - the first of a group of 10 similar properties - the neighbouring half of which is the City Surgery with its extended ground floor commercial glass frontage.

3.2.3 This particular section of City Road, comprises a dense tightly knit urban environment with a morphology that exhibits generally continuous street frontage with 'fingers' of development (generally storage, garaging or workshop structures) to the rear access lane. In the case of the Gaiety site, the rear section is taken-up by a large assembly space.

3.2.4 In general, to both the north and to the south of the application site, buildings range from between 2/3-storeys and 9-storeys, with commercial / retail / restaurant businesses occupying the ground floors and either storage space, or residential or commercial businesses occupying the upper floors - the Gaiety building is equivalent to 5-storeys.

3.2.5 This is a very busy part of Cardiff during the day, and in view of the large number of late night opening take-aways and restaurants, is particularly lively at night.

3.2.6 The application site is also located on the edge of Cardiff City centre within an urban context which offers principally commercial uses at street level with residential or commercial uses above.

3.2.7 Within a relatively short walk, or a brief bus ride, of the application site is Cardiff city centre proper, offering numerous retail stores, banks, hotels and restaurants/bars/coffee shops, three universities, central library, museums, concert venues, cinemas and theatres, offices, parks and a major civic centre, all served by public transport networks and stations.

## 3.3 SITE AREA AND TOPOGRAPHY

3.3.1 The Application site is essentially rectangular with an area of approximately 1630 sqm. It is also more or less flat.



The Gaiety site viewed from the junction of City Road and Keppoch Street





The Gaiety - City Road frontage



Northcote Street Lane - from City Road



Northcote Street Lane - towards City Road



Rear view of City Heights from Northcote Street Lane



Northcote Street Lane - towards the rear of the Gaiety



The Gaiety site - the sub-station in the SW corner

SITE LOCATION  
AND CONTEXT

Redevelopment of:  
**The Gaiety**  
Pre-Application Consultation  
August 2024



## 3.0 Site Location and Context

### 3.4 LAND USE

3.4.1 The Gaiety building and its associated external areas has been vacant for many years. Prior to its last active use as a bingo hall / performance venue, the Gaiety was originally used as a small cinema. The entire property however has now fallen into complete disrepair, with its mechanical and electrical services having been stripped out and its fabric now engulfed in vegetation, it is considered beyond the point of economic or practical refurbishment. The Gaiety building has become a local eyesore - a fundamentally dangerous, derelict structure. The site is now fully hoarded-off and awaiting demolition, following a consent to that affect in December 2023.

### 3.5 ACCESS AND MOVEMENT

3.5.1 The application site's eastern boundary fronts directly onto City Road whereas its northern and western boundaries both front onto Northcote Street Lane, all of which currently provide the primary access and egress from the wider Cardiff highway network. City Road is one of the main distribution roads into Cardiff running north / south, and connects to the 4/6-lane Newport Road which runs east / west at it's southern end, and the busy junction of Mackintosh Place, Richmond Road, Crwys Road and Albany Road at it's northern end. As the new development will be providing limited access for vehicles, the current access from City Road via the adjacent Northcote Street Lane (north), will remain, and effectively provide the new point of access and egress. This will also provide for loading and un-loading when tenants move in and out of the development as well as drop-off points and space for emergency and service vehicle turning.

3.5.2 Primary pedestrian access will be retained along City Road with secondary access from the return and rear sections of Northcote Street Lane. Cycle access will be primarily from the rear section of Northcote Street Lane. Although access from the adjacent lanes will be possible, in view of their narrow widths and limited natural surveillance, access and egress, in general, will be encouraged from the City Road entrance(s).

3.5.3 City Road offers pedestrian, cycle and vehicle access to the wider Cardiff networks.

### 3.6 BOUNDARIES

3.6.1 The application site's boundaries reflect the Gaiety building's previous use as a small leisure / performance venue with associated customer / staff car park. It's



main entrance(s) boundary, is directly off the adjacent City Road public realm, it's side (northern) and rear (western) boundaries, off Northcote Street Lane, are all generally presented as high (rendered) masonry walls with very little fenestration. The southern boundary is represented by the different height masonry walls of the neighbouring building's various structures and back yard.

3.6.2 In general, most sites and buildings along City Road, only present (publicly) their principal frontage or elevation. These frontages offer a generally continuous

street scene to City Road with their two flanking elevations acting as party walls and blank (secure) boundary conditions to their immediate neighbours. The rear(s) and sometimes side(s) of these sites and buildings, in general, provide access to service areas, small private car parking areas or spaces and storage facilities etc.

3.6.3 The built environment surrounding the site contains a wide variety of building types from different periods. Immediately adjoining the northern boundary of the site is Northcote Street Lane, the other side of which

is the City Heights student studio apartment building. The southern boundary is comprised of a 3-storey gable ended property with extended (towards City Road) commercial frontage plus a variety of associated flat and pitched roofed rear extensions and storage buildings. The eastern boundary adjoins City Road and constitutes the Gaiety building itself together with an overgrown boundary hedge and accessway (southern end) into a small customer / staff surface car park. The western boundary of the site adjoins the return section of Northcote Street Lane (running north / south) and constitutes the gable end of the Gaiety building together





with a masonry boundary wall and a metal fenced sub-station enclosure.

3.6.4 Immediately north of the application site, is the City Heights building with its associated private rear courtyard. City Heights is a large volume student studio apartment building, between 4 and 9-storeys, with ground floor commercial (food and beverage) units, tenant amenity space(s) and the building's main entrance.

3.6.5 Immediately opposite the application site on the

eastern side of City Road is a continuous row of 2 and 3-storey pitched roof properties, all with ground floor commercial frontages and upper floor residential accommodation - these buildings create an urban block which is book-ended by gable fronted corner properties to Glenroy Street and Keppoch Street.

3.6.6 The general pattern of development along the length of City Road has resulted in a somewhat visually (happily) chaotic street scene. The variety of scales, architectural styles and materials, and where, over time, properties have undergone re-development, adaptation,

extension or refurbishment, have all contributed to the creation of a muddled, but nonetheless extremely eclectic, interesting and much-loved street scene.

3.6.7 Cardiff Council have expressed an aspiration to see City Road regenerated, to include new higher density development at key junctures along its length, all as opportunities present themselves. Given the dilapidated state of the Gaiety building in particular, there is a real desire to see the site positively redeveloped.

3.7 EXISTING BUILDINGS

3.7.1 Currently the application site constitutes the derelict Gaiety building with its associated customer / staff surface car park (southern third of the site) and the existing sub-station enclosure (south west corner).

3.8 ARCHAEOLOGY

3.8.1 It is understood that the application site is of no archaeological significance.

3.9 ECOLOGY

3.9.1 It is understood that the application site is of no ecological value.

3.10 FLOODING

3.10.1 It is understood that the application site is not liable to flooding.

3.11 LOCAL AMENITIES

3.11.1 As previously described, the application site is located on the edge of Cardiff city centre, which provides a wide range of amenities and services including, restaurants, bars, hotels, leisure facilities and venues, shops, theatres, museums, and parks. The City Road area of Cardiff is home to a burgeoning and thriving multi-cultural neighbourhood supported by a wide variety of commercial, leisure and cultural uses within its vicinity.

3.12 PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND CYCLING

3.12.1 The application site is within relatively easy walking distance of a series of public transport nodes served by both rail and bus services, as well as from all city centre amenities.

3.12.2 The nearest bus stop is located on City Road providing services to the city centre and wider areas of Cardiff. The nearest rail station to the site is Cardiff Cathays station - a 10/15 minute walk away. This station is served by a number of regional services and offers a direct link to Cardiff Central Station and hence to major cities across the UK.

3.12.3 The application site is located on established and well-connected cycle networks that serve the city centre as well as its immediate and wider environs.

SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT

Redevelopment of:  
  
The Gaiety  
  
Pre-Application Consultation  
  
August 2024



# 4.0 Design Concept

## 4.1 THE VISION

4.1.1 Our vision for the application site is premised on a desire to continue the regeneration (and renaissance) of the northern end of City Road, through the intensification of quality affordable homes and public amenity. The resulting development should increase the urban scale and density of the area, and create something elegant, layered, stimulating and timeless — something that will ‘sit’ within the inherently wide-ranging and diverse mix of properties that represent the character of City Road. The new development should make reference to its immediate neighbour to the north, the City Heights building, as well as the eclectic local architectural character and lively street scene - the potential exists for the new development to be a ‘sister’ building to the City Heights building, as ‘brother’.

## 4.2 SITE AND DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

4.2.1 Consideration has been given to the relative adjacency of the proposals to the City Heights building (to the north) across Northcote Street Lane and the boundary with number 189 City Road, “The City Surgery” (to the south), with particular emphasis on the distance between each in relation to direct over-looking. As such, the width of Northcote Street Lane (north) has been effectively widened from 4.3 m to 5.3m (after the development of City Heights and the introduction of oriel windows) to 10m, with the exception of a small section on the City Road frontage which maintains its current width, and as a result, provides better continuity of street scene, ‘active frontage’ and urban fabric to City Road - the distance from the boundary to number 189 City Road is proposed as 12.3m

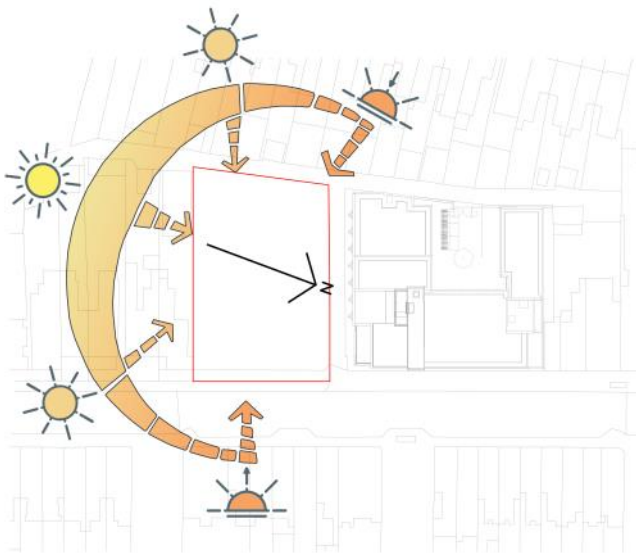
4.2.2 A key aspect of the application proposals for the Gaiety building site is the potential to consider the design as a ‘sister’ to the City Heights building in terms of relative height relationships (from the front of the site to the back of the site and across the City Road frontage), vertical block expression, set-back, projection, recession, corner emphasis, street frontage profile and townscape in relation to neighbouring properties, as well as the palette of materials that could be considered.

4.2.3 This approach will offer a legible architectural expression and character to the new building, and help it to ‘settle’ into City Road’s evolving townscape and the ever shifting and diverse nature of the area.

4.2.4 An Outline Planning Application (Reference Number: 19/01374/MJR) fore the site, received a resolution to grant a permission for a residential development in 2019.



The on-site sub-station - move to a new location



The path of the sun across the site / orientation

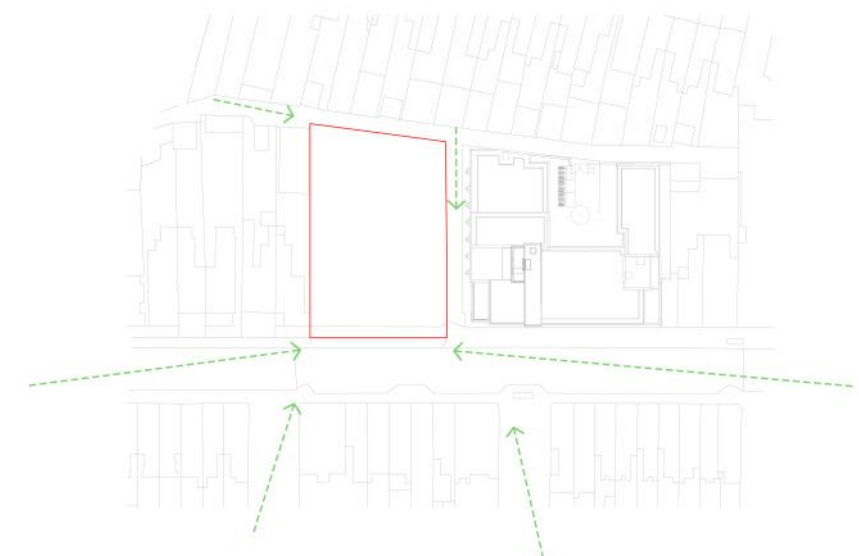
4.2.5 An initial pre-planning application view has been sought from Cardiff Council, many aspects of which are reflected within the application proposals presented here.

## 4.3 THE CONCEPT

4.3.1 An understanding of the application site’s particular situation together with its existing context, has informed the fundamental basis of our concept. The Outline Planning Application (Reference Number: 19/01374/MJR) that received a “resolution to grant a permission” for a residential development in 2019, offered a possible design option for the redevelopment of the site, however, this was for a student residential scheme and not an affordable housing accommodation



Reference City Heights - 3-storeys rear / additional height front



Key views towards the site

scheme, and, although reference could be made to the City Heights building at that time, this could only be done, on paper, so to speak, as the building had yet to be constructed and its true contextual situation appreciated. The outline application proposals represented a design that appeared as two contrasting ‘blocks’ - one set back from the other. These blocks, although displaying motif references from the adjacent City Heights scheme, also appeared quite heavy, box-like and lacking in refinement. By contrast, our concept develops a form of scale, massing and architecture that offers a more appropriate density of development, a consistent extension to the public realm and building line, and, a form of building that makes reference to the inherent building block rhythm of development within City Road as well as the ‘bay’ rhythm and changes of height that form the massing composition of the City

Heights building.

4.3.2 The concept proposals build on recent planning permissions, new developments and current construction activity up and down City Road. Moreover, these new buildings and schemes also demonstrate what is possible within the existing 2/3/4-storey town scape of City Road in general.

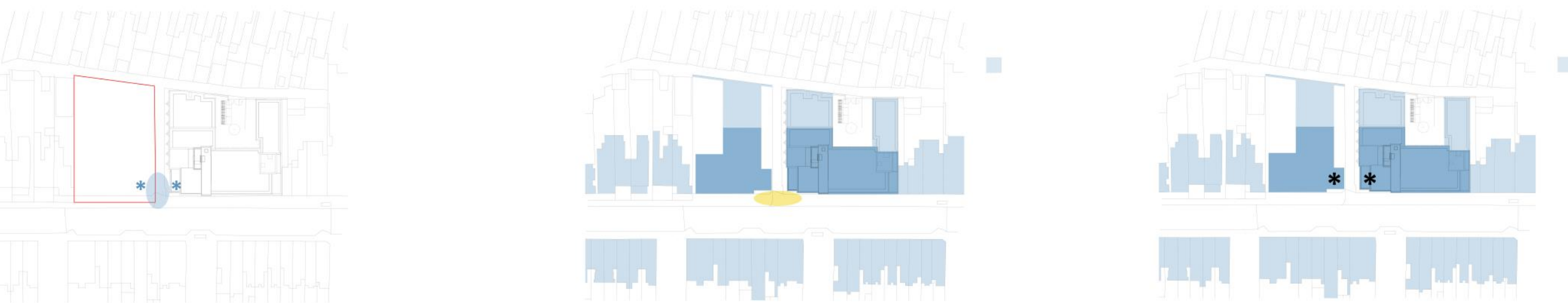
4.3.3 Our intuitive conceptual thinking for the Gaiety site, irrespective of specific briefing or development quantum imperatives, was to consider it as part of a wider regeneration situation. In this way, and in conjunction with the City Heights building immediately to the north across Northcote Street Lane (north) in particular, a legible sense of townscape continuity could be achieved. It was also clear that a degree of

Serial views of The Gaiety site looking north from the southern approach along City Road





A 10m boundary and building-to-building condition



Public realm widening, 'gateway', 'pause point' and building heights reference

subservience between the resulting redevelopment of the Gaiety site and the City Heights building should be adopted, thereby allowing its unique scale, massing and architectural character, relative to its immediate context, to positively influence the compositional development of the proposals for the Gaiety site's redevelopment.

4.3.4 The redevelopment of the Gaiety site should also be considered as offering a unique regeneration opportunity in its own right - this was widely recognised during the early stages of the City Heights building's design development, when massing and capacity studies, at that time, were prepared that included the Gaiety site.

4.3.5 Our concept is premised on determining a form of development that reinforces the now established 'urban

incident' at the junction between Northcote Street Lane (north) and City Road. The City Heights building recognised the 'corner' situation at this juncture and developed a legible architectural response that created an increased widening of both the Lane itself and the public realm directly associated with it. The new building for the Gaiety site seeks to further increase the width of the Lane and the widening of the adjacent public realm, to the point where a form of 'gateway' to the Lane, set up by the relationship between the two buildings, is clearly evident.

4.3.6 It was felt important that the emerging proposals should make strong reference to the immediately adjacent City Heights (student) studio apartment building, not only in respect to scale and massing but in respect to street profile and active ground floor frontage,

vertical block rhythm, varying heights, set-backs and layering.

#### 4.4 DESIGN PRINCIPLES

4.4.1. Visual, as well as physical, impact onto City Road is an important consideration. Although City Road is a busy part of Cardiff, it is epitomised by tired, drab buildings with no discernible unifying character. There is however a certain charm and appeal to City Road - its eclectic mix of uses, styles and materiality is something unique, offering opportunities for interesting, perhaps even 'different' frontage treatments, as well as a way to help enrich its townscape and street scene. A simple, rhythmic, architectural language of different height building blocks and a prominent entrance, with layered

surface materiality and 'punched-hole' or 'projecting' fenestration should be considered in relation to façade proportions and the overall composition of the building. Furthermore, the main pedestrian entrance into the new development should be considered directly off City Road, and where possible commercial, and / or internal amenity or management offices, ground floor uses should also be introduced, all with a view to optimising the available 'active frontage' at street level.

4.4.2 Alternative (secondary) access should be provided, where possible, from Northcote Street Lane to the north and west of the application site for residents using cycles, or for refuse storage and collection, for occasional small service vehicular access and manoeuvres, and, for occasional drop-off. Any part of the building facing onto the adjacent Northcote Street

#### DESIGN CONCEPT

Redevelopment of:

The Gaiety

Pre-Application Consultation

August 2024



4.0 Design Concept



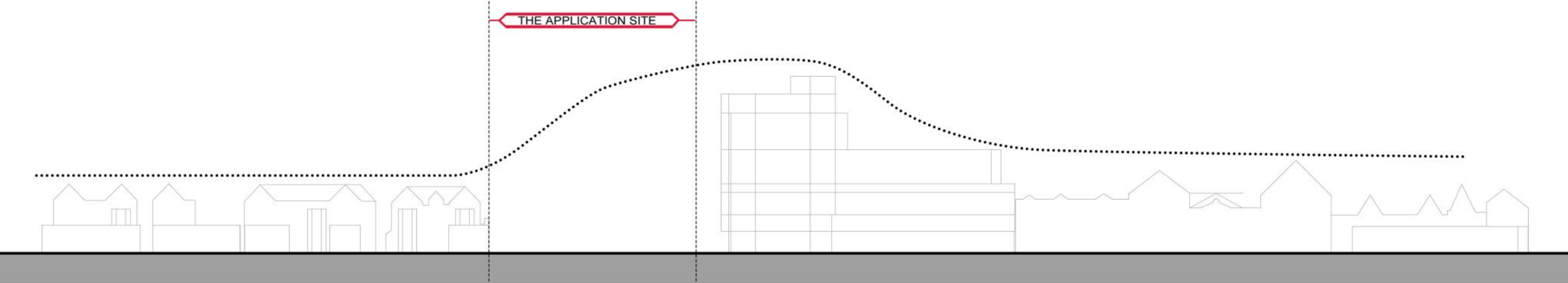
City Road frontage building line / widened public realm and 'active frontage'



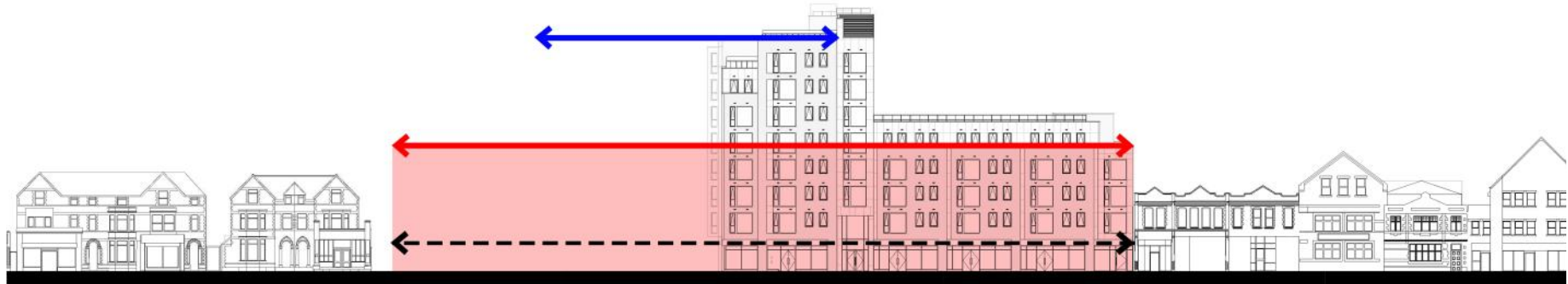
Opportunities for roof mounted PV's



Opportunity for a 'green' courtyard / SUDs



Potential street frontage profile generated by City Heights



Frontage height relationships to City Heights

DESIGN CONCEPT

Redevelopment of:  
**The Gaiety**  
Pre-Application Consultation  
August 2024

Lane should be considered in relation to potential widening and designated status as a public highway. As such, relative proximity should also be considered in respect to the provision of defensible space, and the positive penetration of sunlight and daylight to habitable rooms and spaces.

4.4.3 The essentially 'all-aspect' nature of the

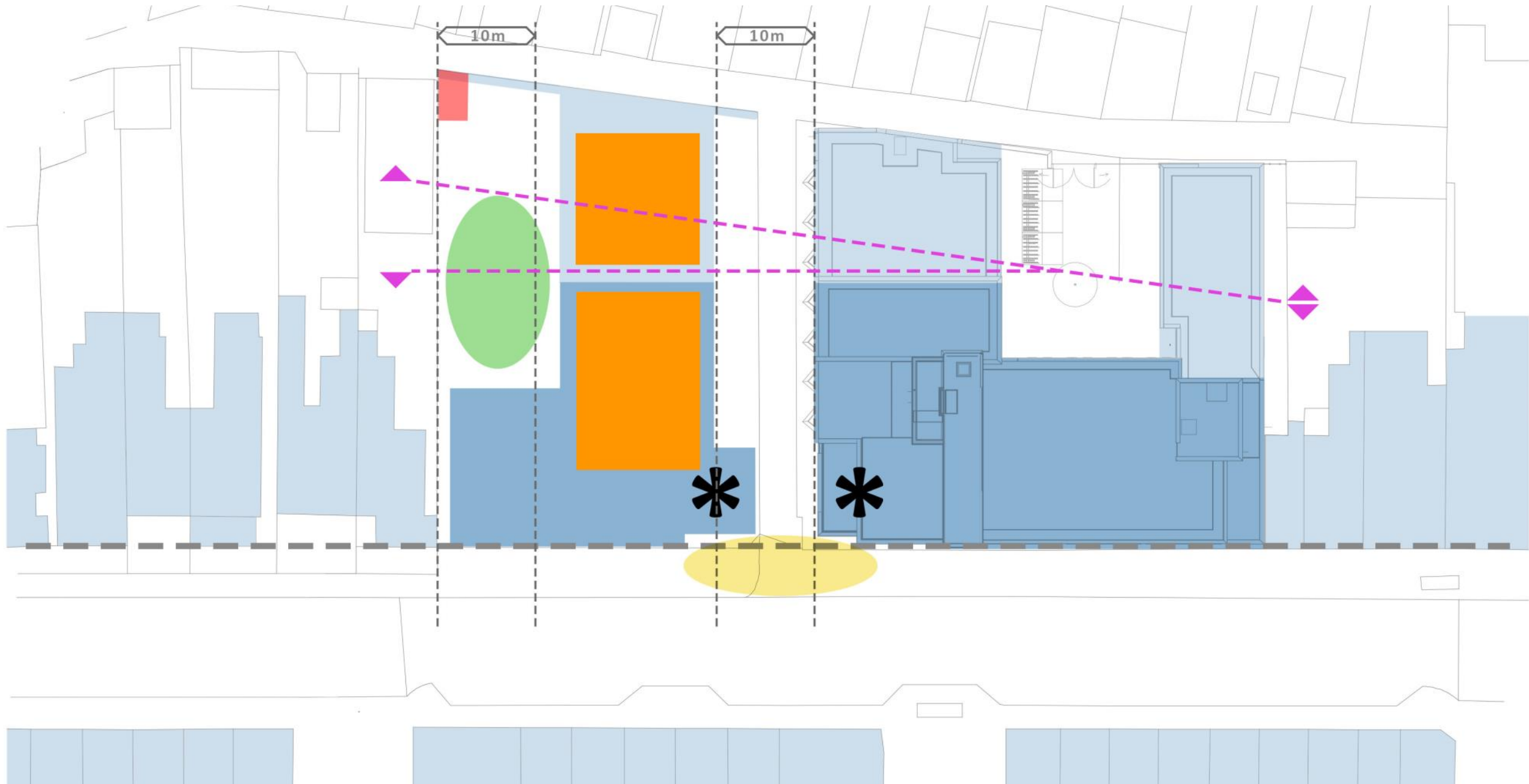
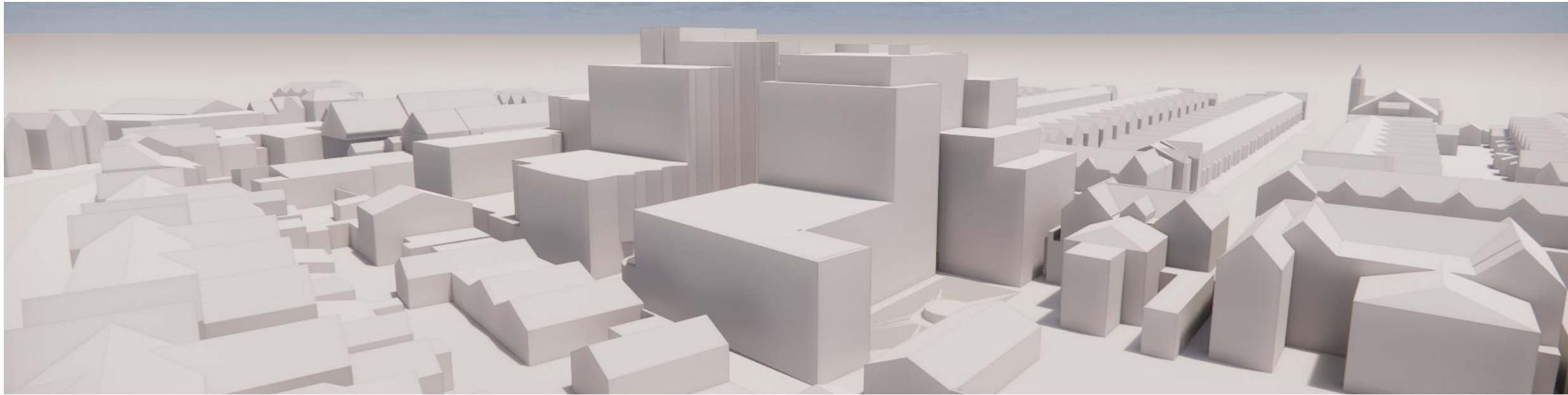
application site - boundaries that face north, south, east and west - should be acknowledged, with a view to minimising the number of residential apartment units that face directly north. In a principally urban area however, such as the northern end of City Road, it is important to create visually 'live' frontages to as many streets, lanes and thoroughfares as possible, and as such, there is an inevitability that certain frontages will face north. This

does not mean that sunlight and daylight penetration to habitable rooms and spaces within a north facing frontage cannot be achieved, it just means that they may need additional consideration.

4.4.4 Building to building proximity across Northcote Street Lane (north) in relation to habitable room to habitable room over-looking should be a key

consideration in relation to the siting of the new building and the potential widening of the lane in general. The potential widening of Northcote Street Lane (north) will help to increase sunlight and daylight penetration to the new building's habitable rooms and spaces as well as, in relation to the City Heights building's oriel windows to the Northcote Street Lane frontage will avoid any direct over-looking. In this regard, the siting of the new Gaiety





Summary site constraints and opportunities diagram

DESIGN CONCEPT

Redevelopment of:  
**The Gaiety**  
 Pre-Application Consultation  
 August 2024



# 4.0 Design Concept

building should be at least 10m away from the City Heights building across Northcote Street Lane (north).

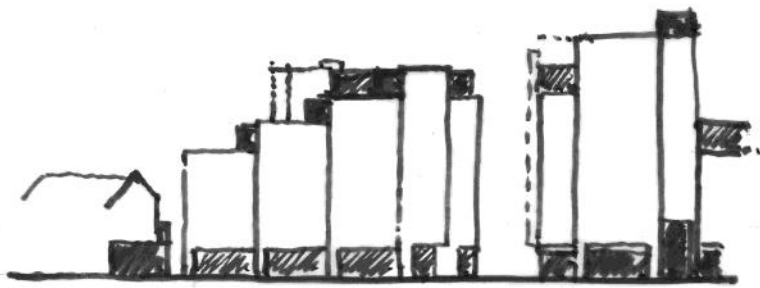
## 4.5 DESIGN EVOLUTION

4.5.1 The evolution of conceptual design thinking for the Gaiety site began as part of the evaluation and appraisal of the various sites that would eventually become the City Heights development. At that stage, the regeneration of this particular quarter of the northern end of City Road considered the Gaiety site as part of the overall study area, however, only the potential massing of the site was considered as part of the overall composition of this new piece of townscape.

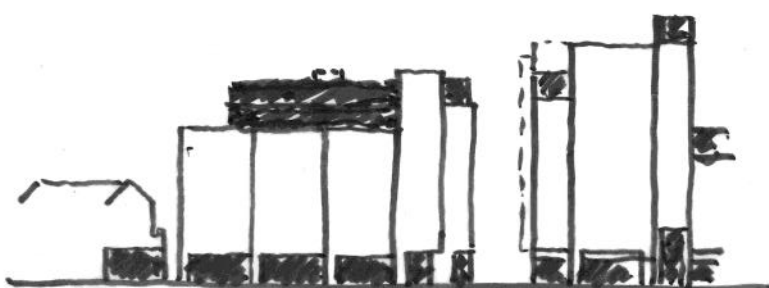
4.5.2 Initial design thinking revolved around a direct response to the Gaiety site's identified constraints and opportunities, with particular reference to the proximity of the immediately neighbouring properties - the City Heights building to the north, and number 189 City Road, "The City Surgery", to the south. These helped to establish the frontage 'lines' of the new building on City Road and Northcote Road Lane north and west. Furthermore, to help define the initial footprint and overall sighting of the new building, given its stated typology, by using recognised WDQR 1-bedroom apartment layouts either side of a 1200mm clear internal communicating corridor, a basic building block width could be generated. Moreover, with the desire to create a development with a private internal courtyard for the benefit of the future residents of the new building, the combination of the frontage lines and the building block width, an overall building footprint could begin to be determined.

4.5.3 A key aspect of the evolution of design proposals for the Gaiety site, was to consider them as a potential 'sister' to the City Heights building as 'brother'. In this regard, to return to the original aspirations for the comprehensive regeneration of the Gaiety site, numbers 195 - 197 City Road, through to numbers 199-209 City Road (now the City Heights building), was a natural approach and a line of design thinking that needed careful investigation. In this way, height variation, (stepped) vertical block expression, set-back, projection, recession, corner emphasis, street frontage profile and townscape in relation to the neighbouring properties, as well as the palette of materials, could all be considered.

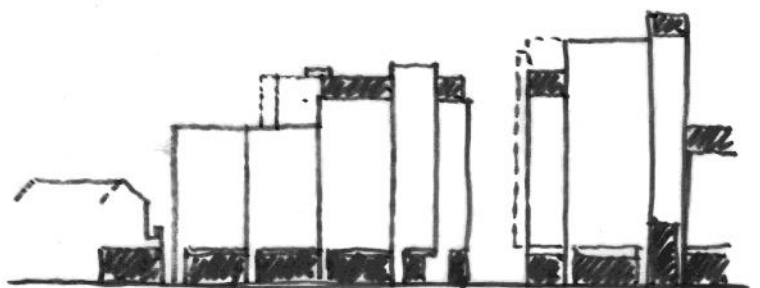
4.5.4 In a similar way, building height change between the front (City Road) and the back (Northcote Road Lane) of the new building was also considered, again with particular reference to the City Heights building and the way in which its Northcote Street Lane (southern) frontage changes height from front (eastern City Road



dismissed



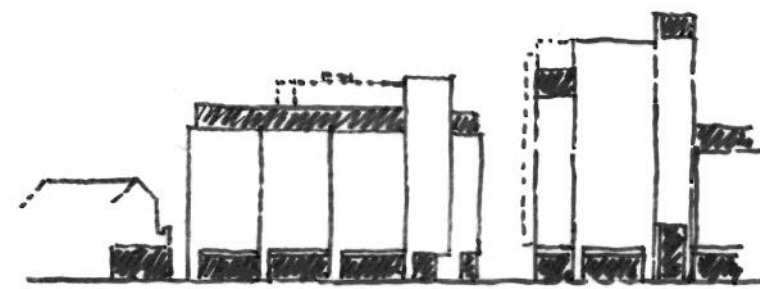
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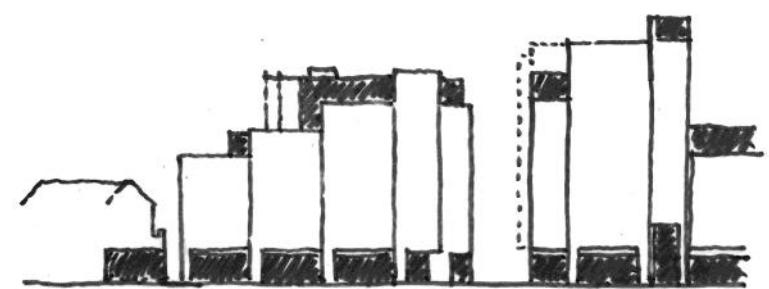
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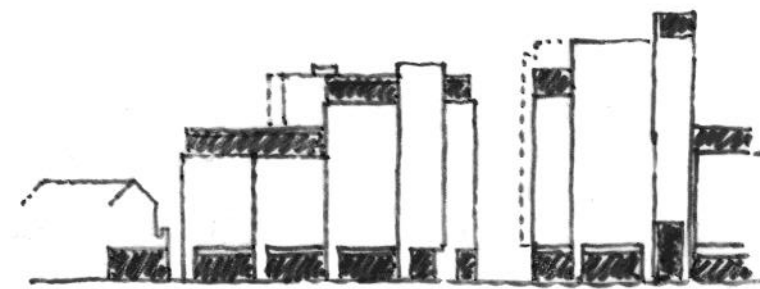
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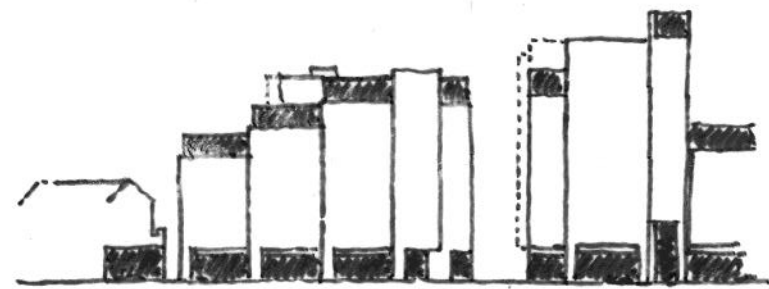
potential



dismissed



dismissed



potential



end) to back (western Northcote Street Lane end).

4.5.5 In combination with capacity studies in plan and block elevation, as part of the design evolution process, a series of scale, (relative) height, massing, form and profile exercises set within a 3D digital context model, were undertaken. These studies have helped to inform the eventual three-dimensional form of the application proposals, particularly when considered in relation to existing neighbouring buildings such as the City Heights building, the Park Conservative Club building and the Co-operative building. Different building block heights were tested in relation to the City Road frontage, and, different apartment block configurations were tested in relation to: the width of the site; whether a double or single loaded corridor solution would offer the most appropriate solution to orientation, aspect, boundary proximities; where individual apartment units could be considered; where groups of apartment units could be considered; and, to what extent the rear sections of the new building would need to reduce in height to acknowledge the relative scale profile(s) of the existing buildings fronting onto the north / south section of Northcote Street Lane, and the views from Richmond Road.

4.5.6 Particular options were explored further and drawn to a higher level of refinement including various mixes of 1-bedroom and 2-bedroom apartment units. In this regard, however, Wales and West Housing Association's strong preference, given their demographic analysis of the area, was for the majority of the apartment units to be 1-bedroom.

4.5.7 To ensure the maximum degree of 'active' frontage to the City Road public realm, a high proportion of the ground floor (City Road) accommodation 'wing' should be allocated for commercial use, with the rest allocated for either tenant amenity space and / or the new building's management offices.

4.5.8 Wherever possible, a recognised standard WDQR 1-bedroom configuration and layout apartment unit at 50 sqm in area (measured between the inside of external, party and corridor walls) in conjunction with a double aspect corridor arrangement should be adopted, with the Northcote Street Lane west 'wing' considered as generally single aspect due its boundary proximity and conditions, and the potential for over-looking.

4.5.9 With the Building Safety Act due to become mandatory legislation in Wales in 2025, all new-build developments in particular should already be responding to its likely requirements (gauged from the equivalent Act in England). As such, the approach to the design, configuration and specific location, within the floor plate, of the primary vertical circulation core is an important

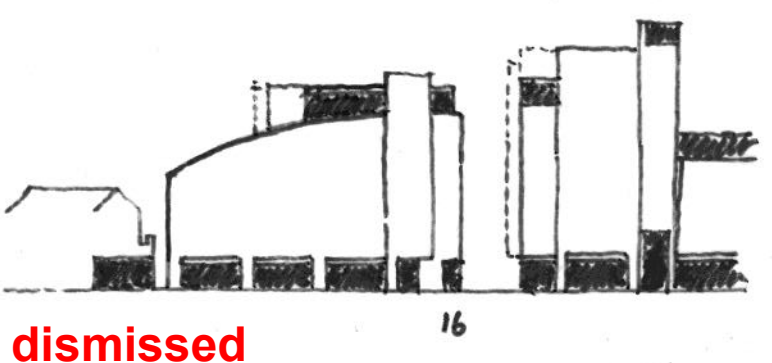
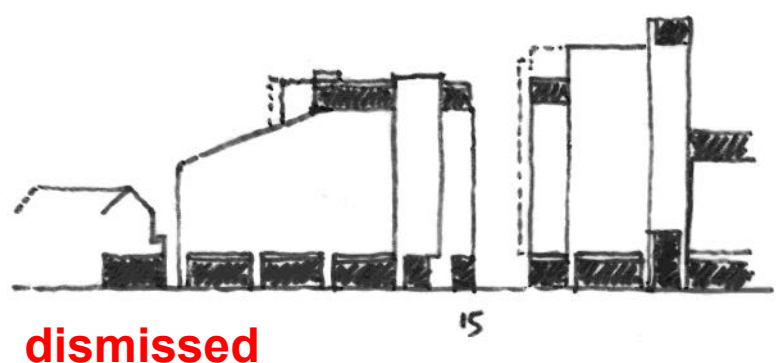
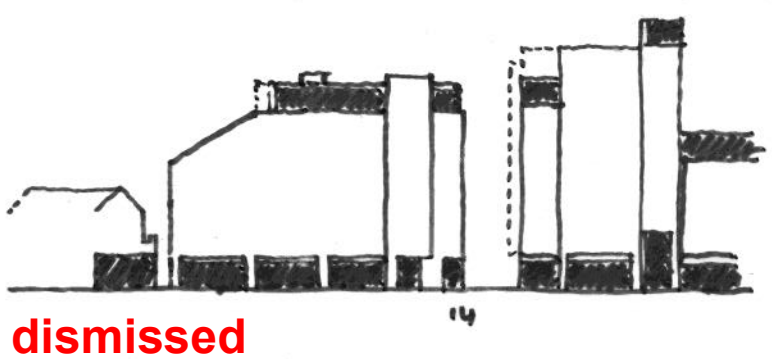
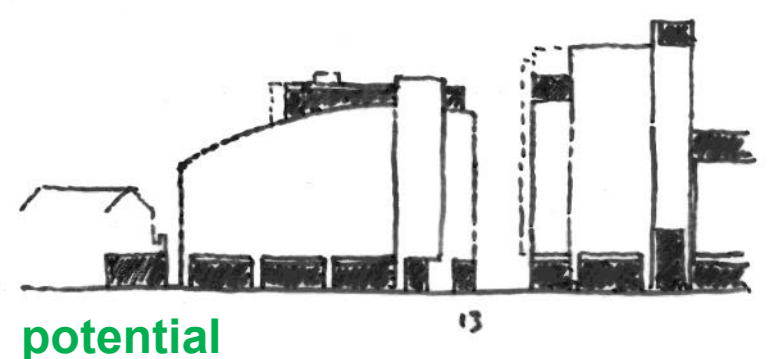
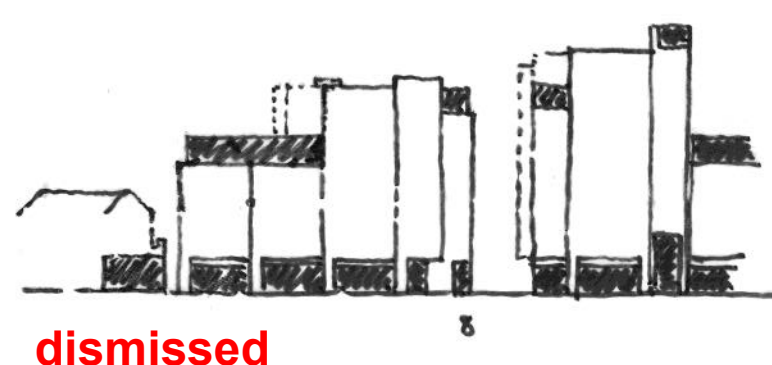
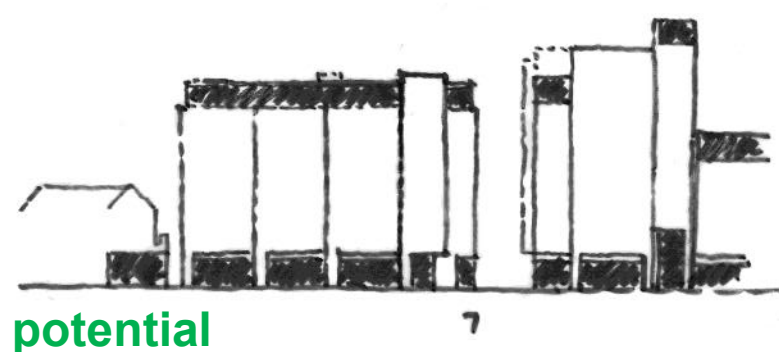
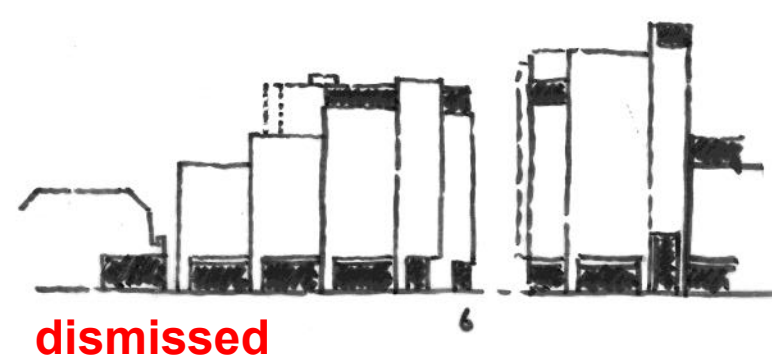
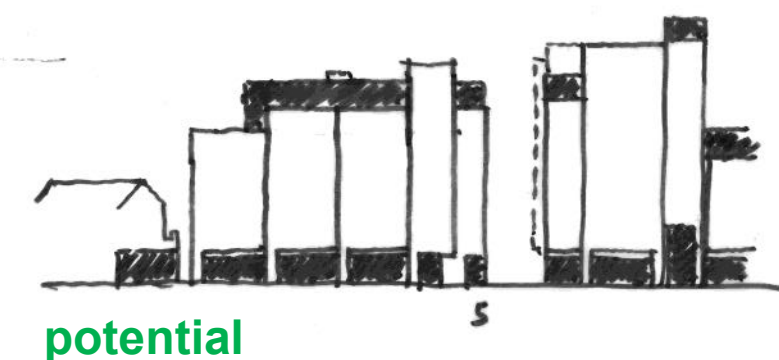
## DESIGN CONCEPT

Redevelopment of:

The Gaiety

Pre-Application Consultation

August 2024





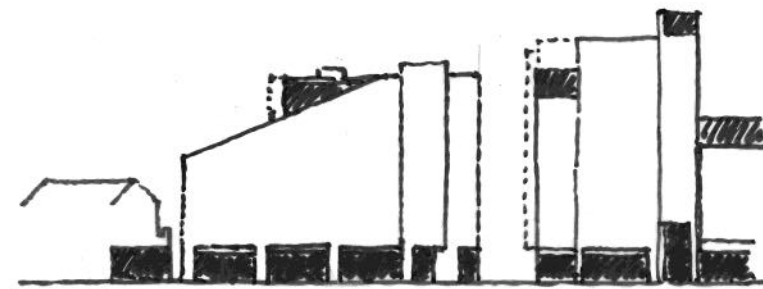
## 4.0 Design concept

design decision. The requirement for buildings, or parts of buildings, over 11m to their 'top' accommodation level dictates that two staircases will be required. Cardiff Building Control have stated that they would consider an inter-locking or scissor staircase arrangement - essentially two staircases in a single shaft - as an acceptable solution to the two staircase requirement, provided that the project fire consultant's "Fire Strategy" is agreed with the Fire Service.

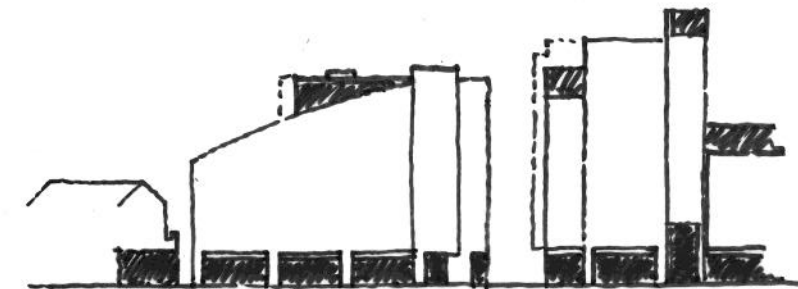
4.5.10 Once these principles had been established, our focus turned to design hierarchy and the most appropriate building block form and architectural language for each section of the building forming the development proposals, and, in particular how these different sections would link together. It was considered that the City Road sections should be afforded something bold with a view to heightened presence and visual interest, and that steps up and down (regular or irregular) from a slightly taller section that would 'mark' the main entrance, to include several set-backs, offered both the best proportions for the frontage façade and the best way to create a series of layers that would provide for both material and height changes. The side and rear sections, it was considered, should make reference to the neighbouring City Heights building, and, in this way, be clearly lower and subservient to the front sections. They should also be configured, in conjunction with the front sections, to form a landscaped central courtyard, that could be used for the new building's SUD's requirement as well as a private (south facing) open space for the benefit of the new building's residents.

4.5.11 Further massing, height and profile studies were undertaken that looked at different 'stepped' frontage designs as well as designs that made subtle reference to the quasi art deco character of the original Gaiety building through the introduction of different curved forms. Although the curved frontage options were interesting and considered worthy of further consideration in relation to the immediate townscape and in particular in relation to the City Heights building, the stepped bay approach was ultimately felt to be the preferred, more appropriate, contextual approach.

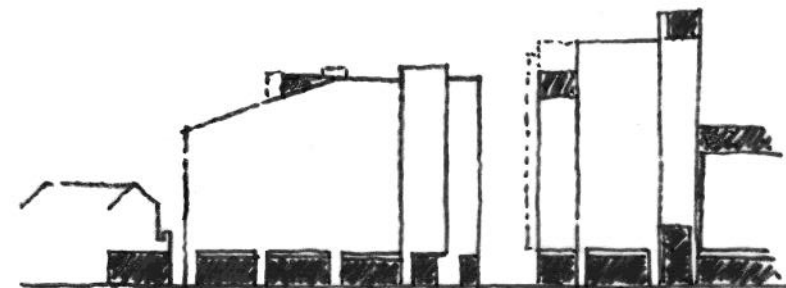
4.5.12 Various materials were considered from render to brickwork to panel systems to sheeting, and it was felt that to emphasise compositional and visual hierarchy, there should be a primary, or predominant, frontage material with the potential for a feature accent material, as well as secondary and tertiary materials for additional layers, projections and set-backs. As such, a red brick, to match the neighbouring City Heights building and general context, was considered to be the preferable material for the majority of the building with sections of complimentary white render.



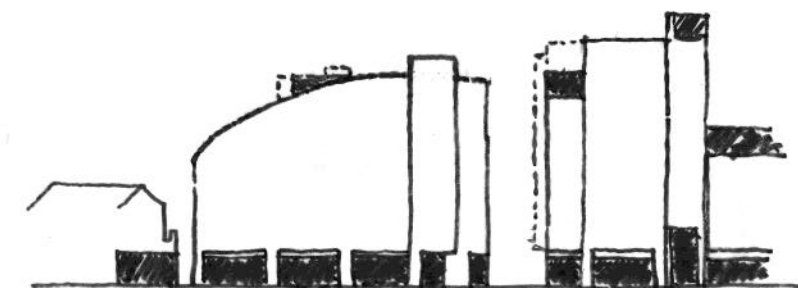
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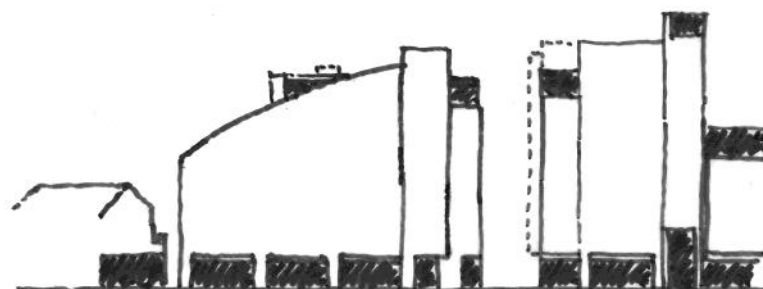
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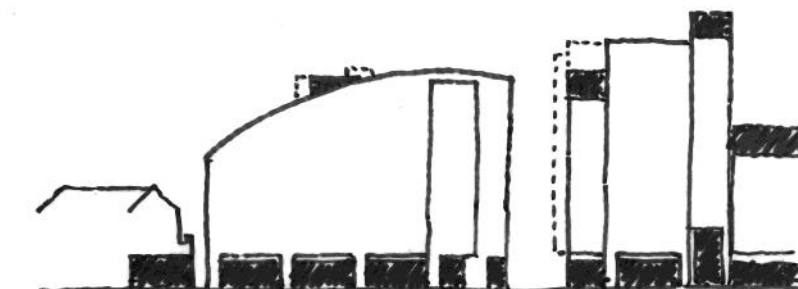
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potential



potential



potential

### DESIGN CONCEPT

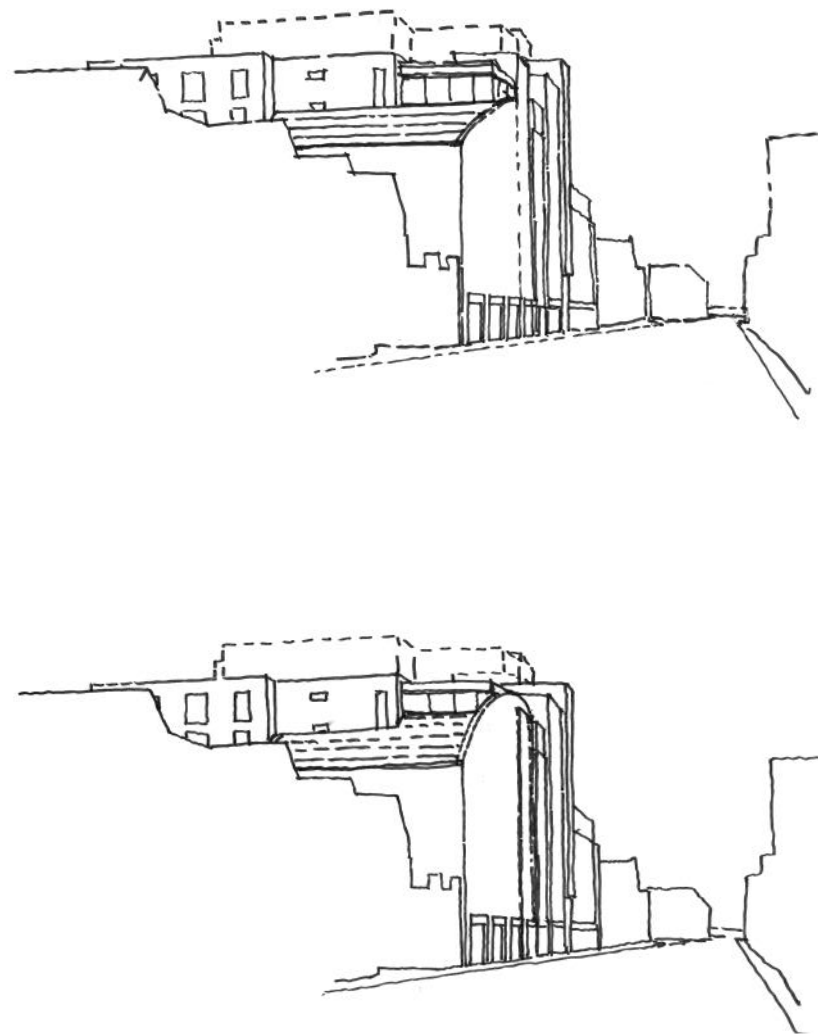
Redevelopment of:

The Gaiety

Pre-Application Consultation

August 2024





The selected curved City Road frontage options in context



#### 4.6 SITE PLAN

4.6.1 The application proposals conceptual design is premised on the basis of dividing the site into two connected 'wings' of accommodation - a City Road (and internal courtyard) facing 'wing', and a Northcote Street Lane (and internal courtyard) facing 'wing'. Given the desire, however, to create a 'gateway' and 'pause point' or small 'incident' at the junction between City Road and Northcote Street Lane (north), the distance between the new building and the adjacent City Heights building (across the entrance into Northcote Road Lane) has been closed up, creating a form of 'T' shaped building footprint.

4.6.2 The front section (facing onto City Road), forms the main body of the new development, and the sides

and rear sections (facing onto the north / south and east /west sections of Northcote Street Lane) form an internal landscaped courtyard arrangement with the front section. Each section acknowledges its particular situation and neighbouring context, and as such, the individual blocks are disposed to: limit apartment units facing directly north; to recognise the relative habitable room to boundary conditions for residential development; to create private resident open space enclosure; to create building 'edge' and active frontage; to recognise the urban hierarchy across the site; to align with the existing points of access and egress for servicing and vehicular movements (principally Northcote Street Lane); and, to offer a legible layout and entrance theory.

#### 4.7 PLANNING

4.7.1 During the period of site assembly for what became the City Heights building, the applicant was encouraged by Cardiff Council to acquire the Gaiety site as well. This would afford the northern end of City Road a significant phased regeneration opportunity. Despite numerous attempts to include the Gaiety site as part of the wider site(s) acquisition, however, this was not to be. The site instead became the subject of an Outline Planning Application by the then owners for demolition of the existing building in favour of a purpose built student residential accommodation building, comprising: 114 individual studio bedrooms; ground floor commercial floor space of 265sqm across two separate units, fronting City Road, and associated external works. A recommendation to approve the application was

accepted, however, as the s106 agreement was never executed, the outline planning permission was never issued. Notwithstanding, the application did establish the principle of residential use for the site as well as a block configuration that increased its height, scale and massing, relative to the original Gaiety building. It also established the principal of continuous positive 'active' frontage to City Road as well as vehicular access and egress from Northcote Road Lane immediately adjoining the northern and western boundaries of the site.

4.7.2 Once the purchase of the Gaiety site by the applicant was 'complete', initial, informal discussions with Cardiff Council's planning department confirmed that demolition of the existing building and redevelopment of the site in favour of a residential apartment building, would be welcomed. Initial

#### DESIGN CONCEPT

*Redevelopment of:*

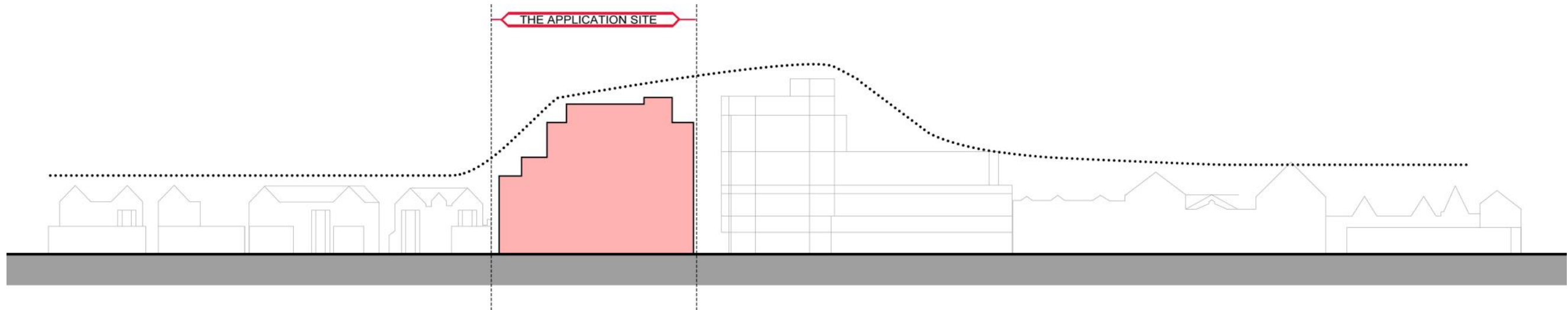
**The Gaiety**

Pre-Application Consultation

August 2024



# 4.0 Design Concept



## DESIGN CONCEPT

Redevelopment of:

The Gaiety

Pre-Application Consultation

August 2024

Aerial view of the proposed City Road frontage at design concept stage in relation to the profile established through the site and context analysis

suggestions for the density of development that would be acceptable on the site together with the possible height, scale and massing of the new building were also discussed, and in this regard, 'first thoughts' proposals

for the design of the new building, with particular reference to the adjacent City heights building, were considered to be a suitable solution. At this stage, it was clear that the tenure of the new building would be

affordable housing, however, the preferred Housing Association (or even Cardiff Council's housing department) as operator, was yet to be confirmed. This meant that initial design proposals were premised on a

notional brief of 70% 1-bedroom apartments and 30% 2-bedroom apartments, and hence, between 60 and 70 apartments in total, and not one, derived from operator analysis of the specific local area 'need'.





City Road street scene looking south west at design concept stage

4.7.3 The initial discussions also established agreement to the initial siting and footprint of the new building, together with its building line(s) and the potential to emphasise the small urban ‘incident’ at the junction

between City Road and Northcote Road Lane, in combination with the widened public realm that had been established by the adjacent City Heights building.

4.7.4 Initial recommendations from Cardiff Council’s planning department suggested that the scheme could by-pass the formal Pre-Application process and proceed directly to a Detail Planning Application via the PAC

process. Further to the initial recommendations however, Cardiff Council’s planning department felt that, on reflection, the scheme should proceed through the formal Pre-Application process.

4.7.5 A formal Pre-Application submission was made to the Council in January 2024 with feedback received in March 2024. The feedback, although supportive of the overall architectural design approach being taken and the principle of 100% affordable housing with commercial frontage to City Road, the Council’s underlying advice / opinion of the scheme was that it should not make reference to the adjacent City Heights building - the Council consider the City Heights building as a development in isolation (compared to its surroundings). In relation to the regeneration of this particular section of the northern end of City Road, this approach seems at odds with the original phased redevelopment approach that was strongly endorsed by the Council during the period of land assembly by the applicant, as mentioned previously.

4.7.6 It is difficult to ignore the fact that the City Heights building exists, and more particularly, it is difficult to ignore the positive impact that it has had on City Road. The increase in residents to the area together with the thriving ground floor commercial food and beverage businesses fit perfectly with the Council’s aspirations for the urban regeneration of the area in general.

4.7.7 It is acknowledged that a minimum development density is always required to support the viability of any project, whether new-build or refurbishment. Wales and West Housing Association, as the preferred operator of the new building, once complete, have determined that a minimum of 70 apartment units, preferably all 1-bedroom, is the most appropriate ‘mix’ and quantum to serve the area’s current housing needs.

4.8 HIGHWAYS

4.8.1 Affordable Housing invariably demands very little, if any, on-site parking. Access and egress for loading and un-loading and emergency and service vehicles is however important, and the proposals in this regard provide for occasional vehicular movements from Northcote Street Lane, immediately adjoining the application site’s northern and western boundaries. There is no intention to alter or modify the existing highways.

4.9 LEVELS

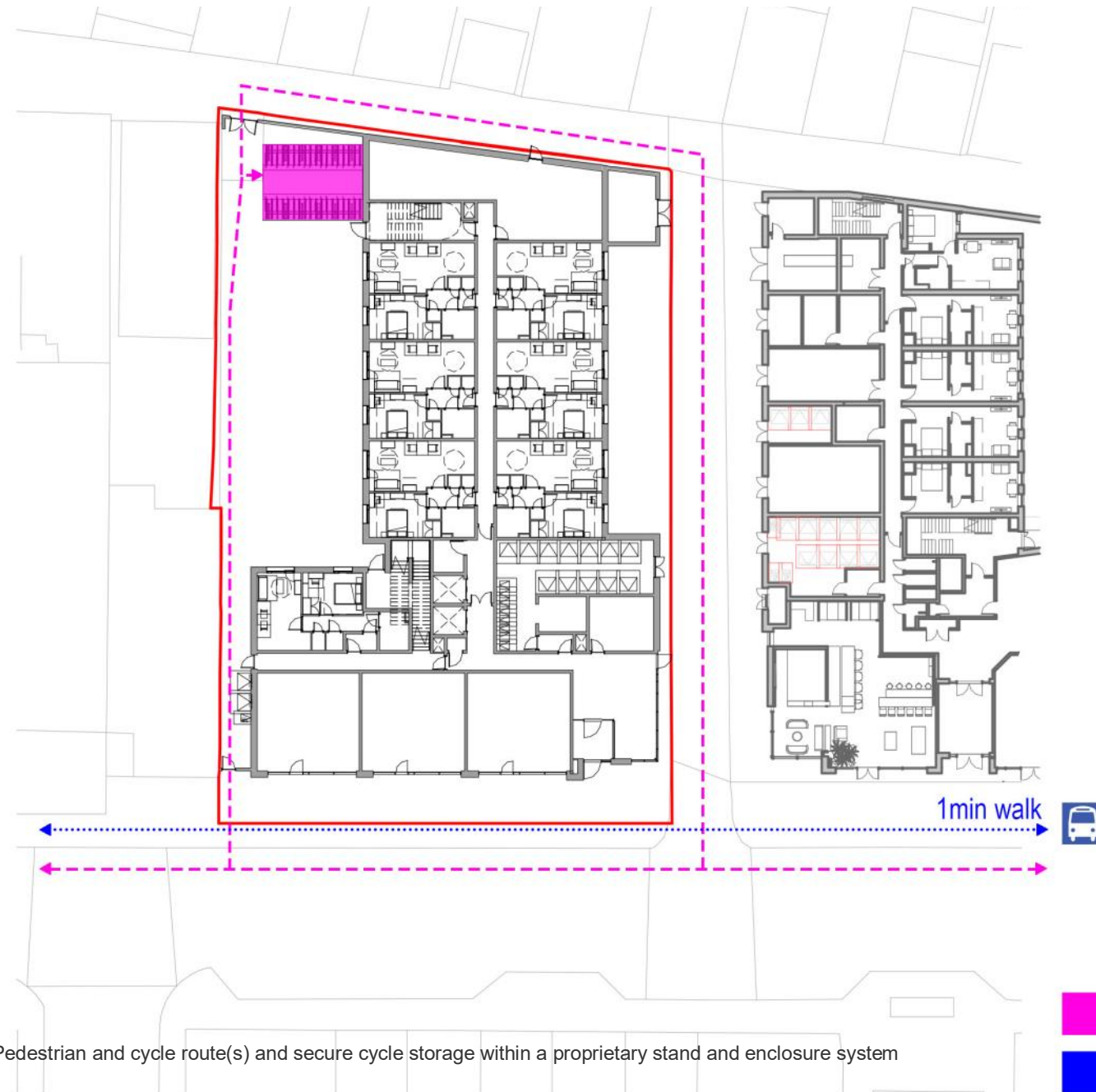
4.9.1 The site can be considered as essentially flat.

DESIGN CONCEPT

Redevelopment of:  
  
The Gaiety  
  
Pre-Application Consultation  
  
August 2024



# 5.0 Response to the Objectives of Good Design



## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

5.1.1 In response to the vision, and by considering the earlier sections of this DaAS as a baseline for the application proposals, this section, demonstrates how the analysis of the site and its immediate context together with the particular requirements of the briefing, have informed the development of the design. This section also demonstrates that the proposals have addressed the objectives of good design as set out in TAN12.

## 5.2 MOVEMENT AND ACCESS

5.2.1 A key requirement of the movement strategy, embedded in the application proposals, is the desire to

provide good accessibility to both local facilities, and, those of the wider Cardiff area. Local facilities encourage community cohesion and bring people together, reducing the reliance on the private car for short journeys.

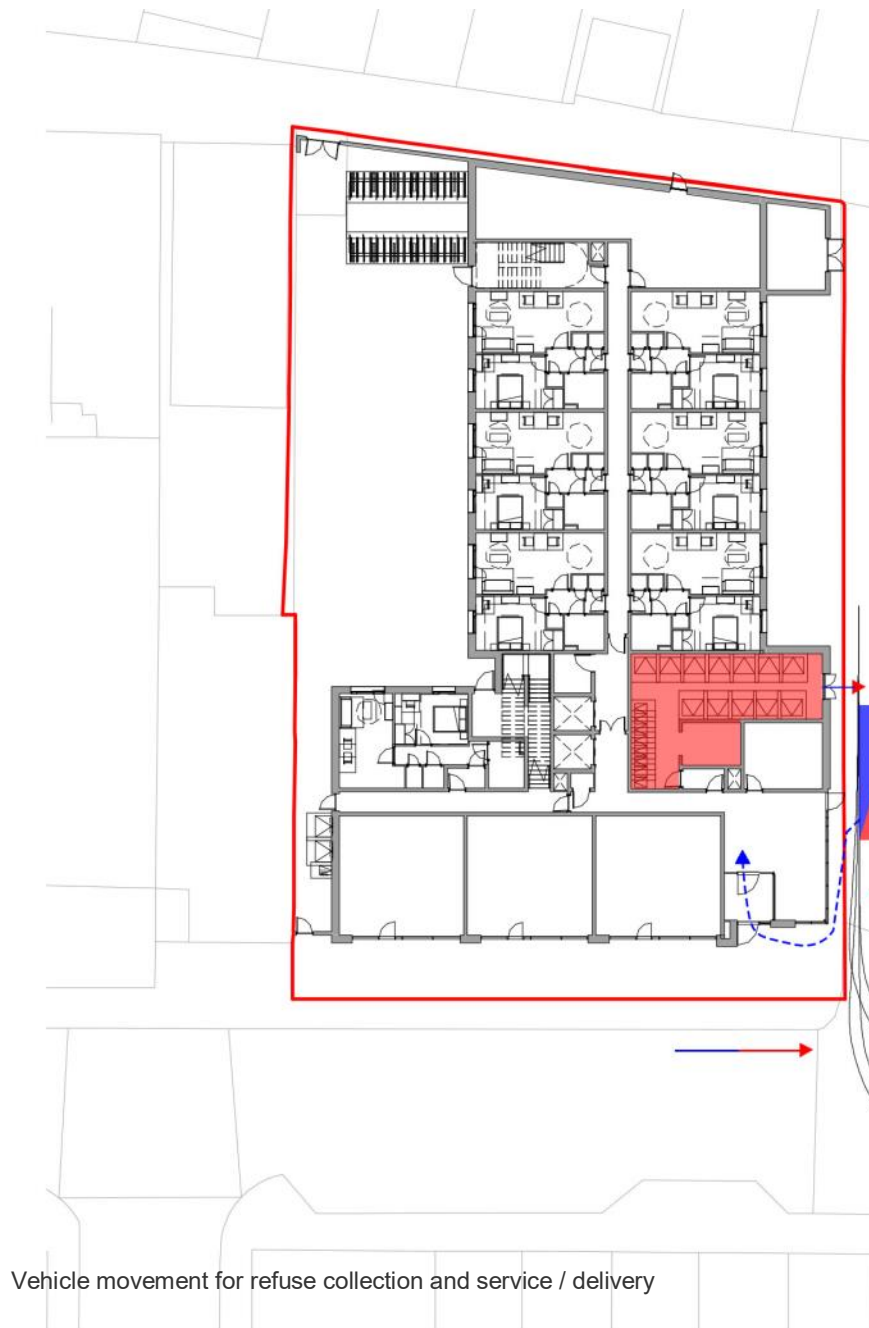
5.2.2 An important principle in this regard is the ability to facilitate sustainable movement, and hence the selection of the right site in the first place. As the proposed development will be located on the edge of Cardiff city centre, it will benefit from (inherent) excellent connectivity to a wide range of facilities and transport options, all as described in previous sections of this DaAS.

## 5.3 PUBLIC TRANSPORT

5.3.1 The application proposals are within easy walking distance of a series of public transport nodes served by both rail and bus services, as well as from all city centre amenities.

5.3.2 The nearest bus stop is located on City Road in front of and adjacent to the junction with Strathnairn Street - within sight of the Application site - providing services to the city centre and wider areas of Cardiff. The nearest passenger rail station to the application site is Cathays Station, located on the edge of the city centre - a 10/15 minute walk away.

5.3.3 As the application site is located on the well-connected cycle networks that serve the city, secure



covered cycle storage facilities will be provided. There is no specific provision for car parking, however potential exists for an on-site drop-off area for servicing and residents loading / un-loading within the courtyard, via a side gateway and passage on the southern boundary off City Road that runs right through the site (and the new rear courtyard) to the a similar gateway off the western section of Northcote Road Lane.

## 5.4 CYCLING

5.4.1 The application site is located close to the city centre and connects with a number of established local and city-wide cycle routes. Cycle storage for the new building is provided at 1 cycle per bedroom. Cycling will always be promoted as a primary mode of transport for





the residents of the new building. Secure covered cycle storage facilities will be provided within the site for the exclusive use of the residents. The covered storage facilities will be located at the rear (western) section of the open courtyard with access and egress primarily from the western section of Northcote Road Lane where good natural surveillance for security can be achieved.

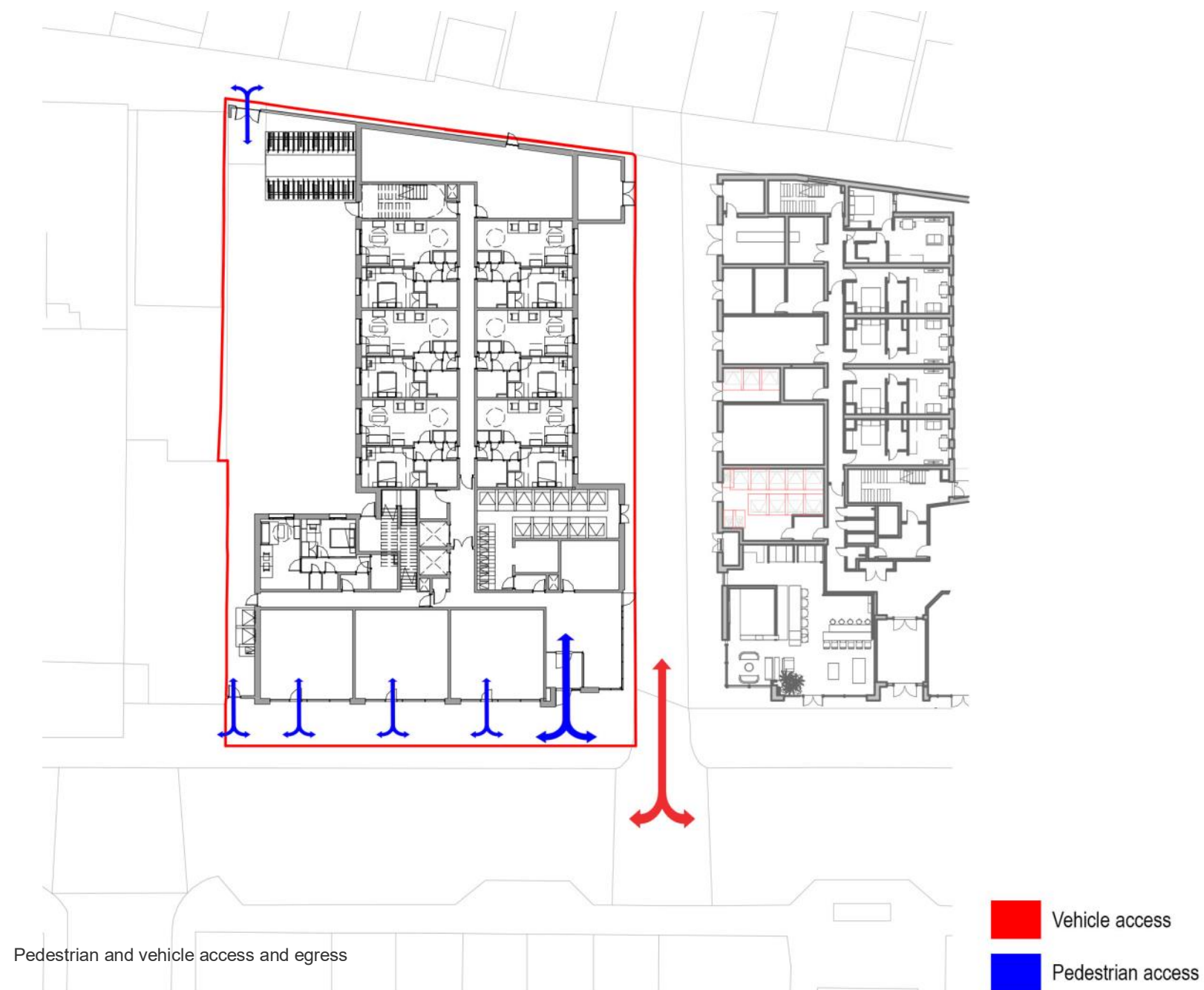
## 5.5 PEDESTRIANS

5.5.1 The main entrance in and out of the new building will be clearly 'marked' and legible within its City Road frontage, and will offer direct pedestrian connection and passage to the established public realm and network of routes in and around the city centre.

5.5.2 The main pedestrian access point will be located off City Road, which is already a main pedestrian thoroughfare. Alternative, but very much secondary, access points will be provided off Northcote Street Lane (north) and the rear courtyard and side passage adjacent to the site's southern boundary. These secondary access and egress points will provide either direct or indirect secure access into the central (open) landscaped court yard.

## 5.6 CAR PARKING

5.6.1 As the location of the application site is close to the city centre enabling potential residents of the new building to easily access surrounding public transport networks, no specific provision for car parking is



proposed. It may be possible however to use the immediately adjacent junction between City Road and Northcote Road Lane as a drop-off area for residents, or for loading / un-loading - this juncture is very close to the new building's main entrance.

## 5.7 INCLUSIVE ACCESS

5.7.1 The new building has been designed to be fully inclusive. It will meet all statutory requirements, and no aspect of the design or layout will inhibit its use by a partially sighted, ambient disabled or wheelchair bound person.

5.7.2 All entrance points will provide 'level' access and egress to the public realm, the internal, open landscaped

courtyard and all external perimeter passageways. Entrance doors will be automated with push pad controls to assist disabled users. Appropriate tactile paving will be provided at the proposed entrance points to ensure that pedestrians, including those with a visual impairment, wheelchairs users and those with special mobility requirements can access and exit the site and the new building safely.

## 5.8 EMERGENCY ACCESS

5.8.1 Emergency access to the site is proposed directly from City Road and the main entrance at the front of the new building. Alternative access is available from the side passageway adjacent to the southern boundary, or via Northcote Road Lane, adjacent to the northern or western boundaries.

RESPONSE TO THE  
OBJECTIVES OF  
GOOD DESIGN

Redevelopment of:

The Gaiety

Pre-Application Consultation

August 2024



# 5.0 Response to the Objectives of Good Design

The Gaiety, City Road, Cardiff

Revision 0305/08/2024

Summary Area Schedule

All figures are approximate and subject to design development.

Level	Parking	Unit Types				Total Units	Totals Areas	
		Cycles	1 - Bed	2 - Bed	External Amenity (sqm)	Commercial (sqm)	GIA sqm	NIA (residential) sqm
G	74	7			334	159	927.5	369.5
1			12	1			904	717.9
2			12	1			904	717.9
3			10				675	534.5
4			7	1			563.5	441.8
5			8				549.5	428
6			6	1			508.5	389
7			4				316.5	219.5
Total Apartment Units			66	4			5348.5	3818.1
Percentage Unit Type			94%	6%				
Total Amenity Space					334			
Retail Total						159		
Cycles Total		74						

Summary Accommodation Schedule

## 5.9 CHARACTER

### Amount

5.9.1 The quantum of development proposed for the application site is described in detail through the Area Schedule above. In summary, the application is for 70 WDQR compliant affordable housing, apartment units - 66 x 1-bedroom units and 4 x 2-bedroom units; 3 small 54 sqm (equal) commercial units on the ground floor facing directly onto the City Road public realm - these units can be combined to suit market demand, as required - a range of building type associated internal and external resident amenity spaces, also on the ground floor together with all associated front and back-of-house management and service spaces. These spaces will all be located on the ground floor of the new building and will be accessible from City Road or Northcote Road Lane (north and west).

### Layout

5.9.2 Each section of the design has been configured to afford the most efficient layout possible. The front and side 'wings' have, wherever possible, been set-out on the basis of a regular / modular structural grid related directly to the recognised area and configuration of a 'standard' WDQR compliant 1-bedroom apartment unit at 50 sqm, either side of a 1200mm wide central communicating corridor. The Northcote Road Lane (north) 'wing' is configured precisely on this basis with 3/4 modular bays of standard 1-bedroom apartment units and a narrow 2-bedroom unit across the 'end' of the wing to fit with the boundary to Northcote Road Lane (west), whereas the City Road 'wing' is configured on the

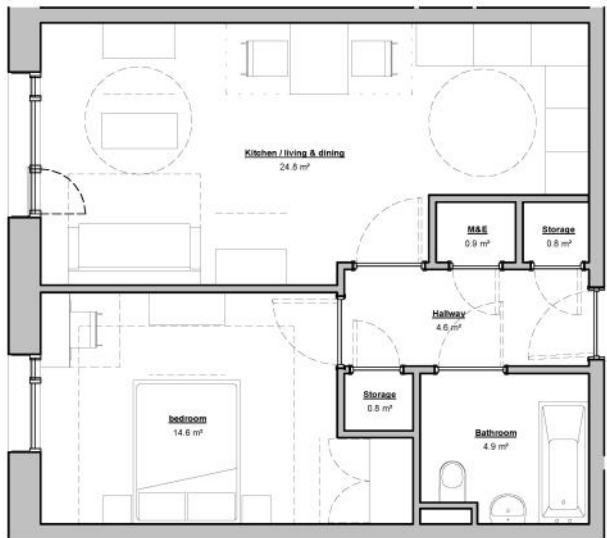
basis of 3 modular bays of standard 1-bedroom apartment units, a deeper, narrower 1-bedroom apartment unit (all facing towards City Road) and a longer, narrower 1-bedroom apartment unit across the communicating corridor (facing towards the central open courtyard). The primary vertical circulation core is situated at the 'elbow' between the two wings and links the two communicating corridors together via the lift lobby space.



Typical upper floor modular layout



The Gaiety site, as existing, as a vacant plot and as the proposed redevelopment, highlighting the rhythmic group of inter-locking / layered blocks, incorporating various steps and set-backs, that, form the City Road frontage

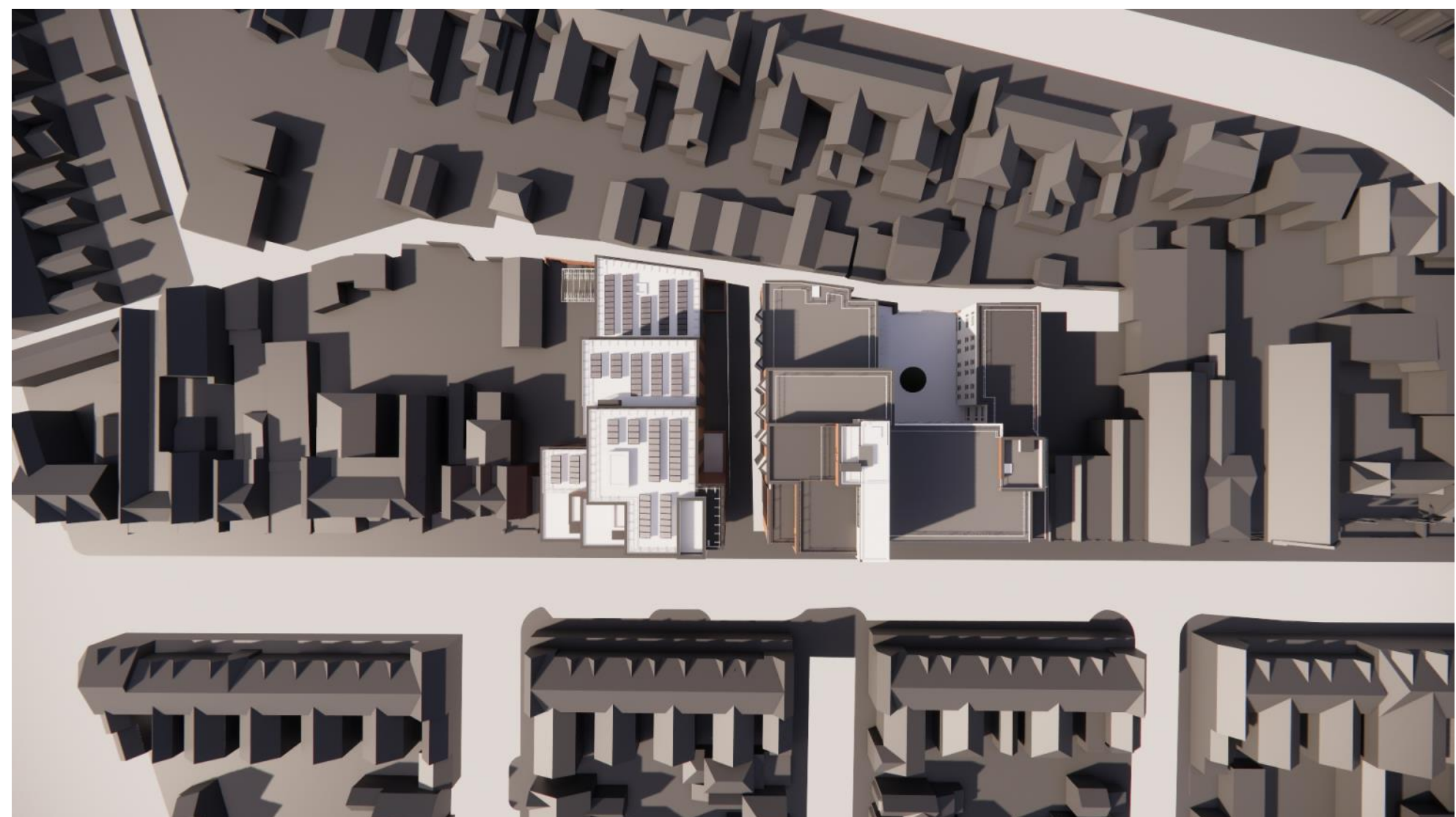
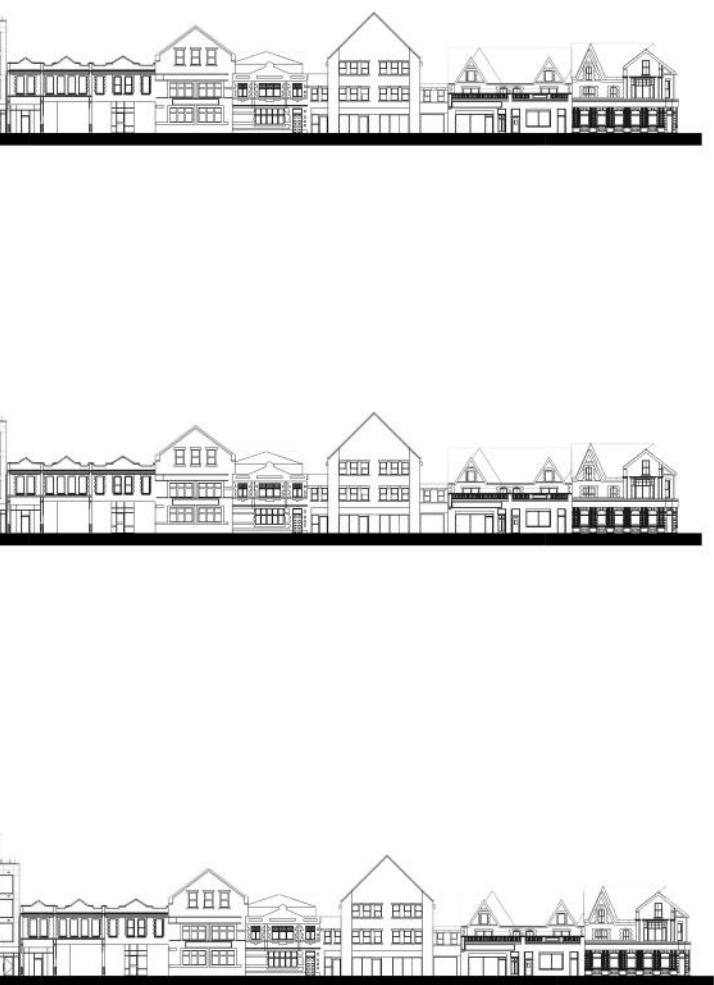


### WDQR Plans

5.9.3 As has been mentioned earlier in this document, the application proposals and the apartment layouts in particular, adhere to the Welsh Development Quality Requirements 2021 – Creating Beautiful Homes & Places (WDQR) standards, launched in July 2021. These standards superseded the earlier DQR standards as a response to the recommendations of the housing quality standard with a view to setting new quality requirements for social housing centred on flexibility, space, and sustainability.

5.9.4 The application proposals have been seen by a Welsh Government Senior Housing Standards Technical





Officer - the apartment layouts were considered as perfectly compliant and appropriate with no changes required, and, the general design was welcomed. The new building's orientation was discussed with particular reference to sunlight and daylight penetration as well as the potential for over-heating and good ventilation (natural and mechanical) - there were no concerns raised in relation to any of these issues.

5.9.5 To ensure that the application proposals can be adapted to suit a range of different Housing Association tenancy purposes, including "General Need", an alternative (discrete) secondary entrance has been incorporated into the design as part of the return main entrance and associated lobby amenity space glass

frontage from City Road into Northcote Road Lane (north).

### Scale

5.9.6 The scale of the proposals has largely been determined through the analysis of the site in relation to its immediate and wider contexts. This analysis led to the development of a rhythmic group of inter-locking / layered blocks, incorporating various steps and set-backs, that, from the City Road frontage, range from 4-storeys to 8-stories. This scale configuration and profile was considered an appropriate 'fit' in respect to the existing street scene, and one that would offer a suitable

scale gradient relative to its neighbours, and, at the same time serve to visually reinforce its position and townscape role in this regard. In a similar way, the analysis also suggested that the side and rear sections of the new building that front onto Northcote Street Lane (north and west) should follow a similar stepped scale of 7/8-storeys down to 3-storeys. This would, not only reinforce the mews-type character of Northcote Road Lane (west) in particular, but follow a similar stepped profile as the adjacent City Heights building across Northcote Street Lane (north).

5.9.7 Overall, the application proposals respond to the inherent morphology of this particular part of City Road in so far as sections of the properties have been

developed entirely from front to back, ie from the City Road frontage to the Northcote Road Lane (west) frontage. The City Road block steps from 4-storeys at its southern most end, adjacent to the boundary with number 189 City Road, "The City Surgery", up, via a series of equal steps and set-backs, to 8-storeys, as the section that 'marks' the main ground floor entrance into the new building, and the section that creates the set-back return 'corner' into Northcote Street Lane (north). The section that marks the main entrance has also been set slightly forward of, and circa 1m higher than, the adjacent sections as a way to further emphasise its role in this regard. The Northcote Road Lane (north) block steps from 8-storeys at its eastern end, to 7-storeys, to 3-storeys at its western end. This reflects a similar

## RESPONSE TO THE OBJECTIVES OF GOOD DESIGN

Redevelopment of:  
**The Gaiety**  
Pre-Application Consultation  
August 2024



# 5.0 Response to the Objectives of Good Design

sequence of steps from east to west adopted by the City Heights building directly opposite across Northcote Road Lane (north).

5.9.8 The proposed storey heights reflect the relatively modest commercial ground floor frontages within City Road as well as the predominantly residential scale of their respective upper floors. Moreover, the balance of features such as windows and doors, and the degree of solid-to-void, represents a consistent approach in relation to the relative scale, and solid-to-void of the neighbouring properties in City Road and its immediate environs.

## Appearance

5.9.9 The inherently eclectic mix of materials, building typologies, styles and architectural languages within City Road, combined with it's somewhat tired and run down appearance, offers the opportunity for the application proposals to be considered as a means by which to continue the "re-development renaissance" of the area, started by the City Heights building. City Road has a particular vibrancy as a result of its multi-cultural inhabitants and a certain energy generated by its many young people. The application proposals have responded to this position by suggesting a form of architectural design that legibly expresses the typological nature of affordable housing, with space for ground floor commercial uses and internal amenity, combined with a palette of materials that aims to promote a positive visual dialogue with the other buildings in City Road. In this way, the appearance of the proposals is characterised by a surface wall (background) material in combination with limited palette of other materials to add particular emphasis and expression. The proposals employ generally 'punched-hole' window openings, generally larger proportion for kitchen / living / dining spaces, and smaller proportion for bedrooms. These have been carefully, but simply, disposed and proportioned to 'fit' with the neighbouring context, and all in relation to the overall composition of the various sections of the building's three-dimensional arrangement – in particular the City Road frontage.

5.9.10 The City Road frontage is proposed as essentially brickwork similar in colour to that used on the adjacent City Heights building, with clear glass large full-height 'punched-hole' (vertical emphasis) window openings - accent bronze coloured insert 'fins' and corner cappings as part of particular window openings - horizontal slot windows, feature set-back / insert bay windows, selected contrasting coloured sections of render, large commercial and internal amenity space frontage windows and doors plus sections of metal facia.



East (City Road) elevation



West (Northcote Road Lane) elevation





North (Northcote Road Lane) elevation



South (courtyard / 187 City Road) elevation

5.9.11 The Northcote Road Lane (north) frontage is also proposed as essentially brickwork similar in colour to that used on the City Heights building directly opposite, with clear glass large full-height 'punched-hole' (vertical emphasis) window openings. The return corner to City Road is emphasised by accent bronze coloured corner cappings and an extended ground floor window to the main entrance lobby lounge / seating area. The ground floor refuse store and adjoining internal back-of-house space (the precise allocation and planning - management and storage facilities - of which will be determined once the Housing Association operator has confirmed their specific requirements) has been extended (west) by a structural bay, which in turn, adds a degree of layering to the frontage that helps, in combination with the relocated sub-station enclosure, to add a sense of enclosure and defensible space to the 3 ground floor apartment units with adjoining landscaped terraced areas. The Northcote Road Lane 'wing' of accommodation forming the frontage is also stepped, from the City Road (east) end at 8-storeys to 7-storeys to 3-storeys at the Northcote Road Lane (west) end, as direct response to both the scale of the adjacent context and the way in which the City Heights building, directly opposite, steps from east to west.

5.9.12 The Northcote Road Lane (west) frontage presents a continuation of the brickwork from the Northcote Road Lane (north) frontage but begins to introduce a section of complimentary coloured render in the form of a projecting wall / change of plain, that allows the change of material to return into the central open courtyard frontage. As part of the Northcote Road Lane 'wing' of accommodation, the transition point between the 3-storey section and the 7-storey section presents a brickwork flank wall with clear glass large full-height 'punched-hole' (vertical emphasis) window openings providing a double aspect outlook to the corresponding apartment units as well as an end-of-corridor full height window / AOV (automatic opening vent). The top storey and further set back introduces a small 'bay' window as part of the corresponding apartment unit's kitchen / living / dining space, and, a horizontal 'slot' window to its internal hallway and internal corridor.

5.9.13 The primary frontage to the central open courtyard is proposed as a stepped rendered wall with clear glass large full-height 'punched-hole' (vertical emphasis) window openings - horizontal slot windows have been introduced and positioned to be at eye level from the secondary fire escape's half landings. The 7-storey rendered section of the frontage returns into the 8-storey brickwork vertical circulation core section, creating a natural layered arrangement and clear hierarchy between these two sections as well as

#### RESPONSE TO THE OBJECTIVES OF GOOD DESIGN

Redevelopment of:

The Gaiety

Pre-Application Consultation

August 2024



5.0 Response to the Objectives of Good Design

RESPONSE TO THE  
OBJECTIVES OF  
GOOD DESIGN

Redevelopment of:  
  
The Gaiety  
  
Pre-Application Consultation  
  
August 2024



Ground Floor Plan  
Key  
1 Bed  
BoH  
Commercial  
Entrance Lobby



1st and 2nd Floor Plan  
Key  
1 Bed  
2 Bed





3rd Floor Plan

**Key**

- 1 Bed
- 2 Bed



4th Floor Plan

**Key**

- 1 Bed
- 2 Bed

RESPONSE TO THE  
OBJECTIVES OF  
GOOD DESIGN

Redevelopment of:

The Gaiety

Pre-Application Consultation

August 2024



# 5.0 Response to the Objectives of Good Design

RESPONSE TO THE  
OBJECTIVES OF  
GOOD DESIGN

Redevelopment of:  
  
The Gaiety  
  
Pre-Application Consultation  
  
August 2024



5th Floor Plan

Key

- 1 Bed
- 2 Bed

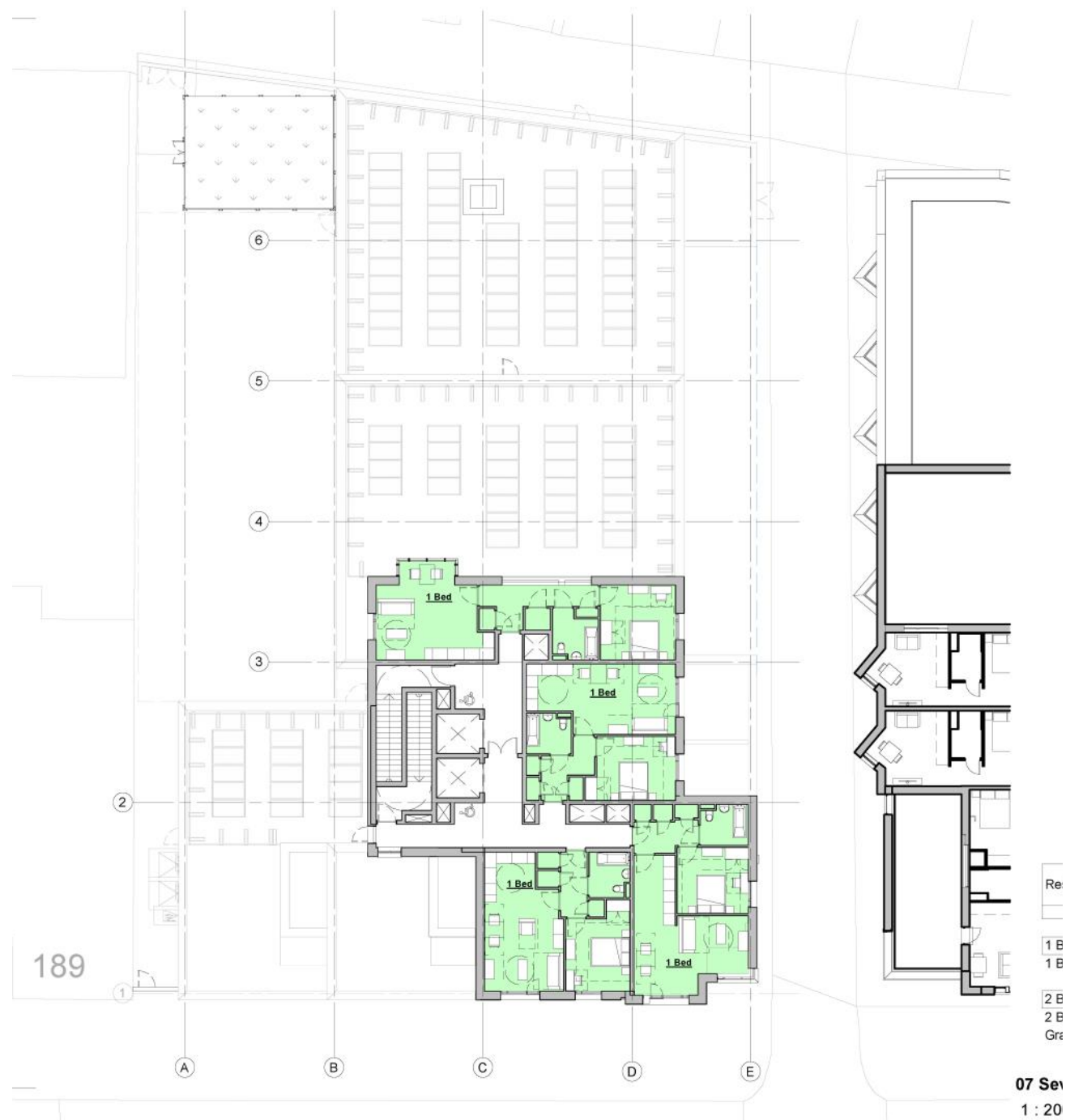


6th Floor Plan

Key

- 1 Bed
- 2 Bed





RESPONSE TO THE  
OBJECTIVES OF  
GOOD DESIGN

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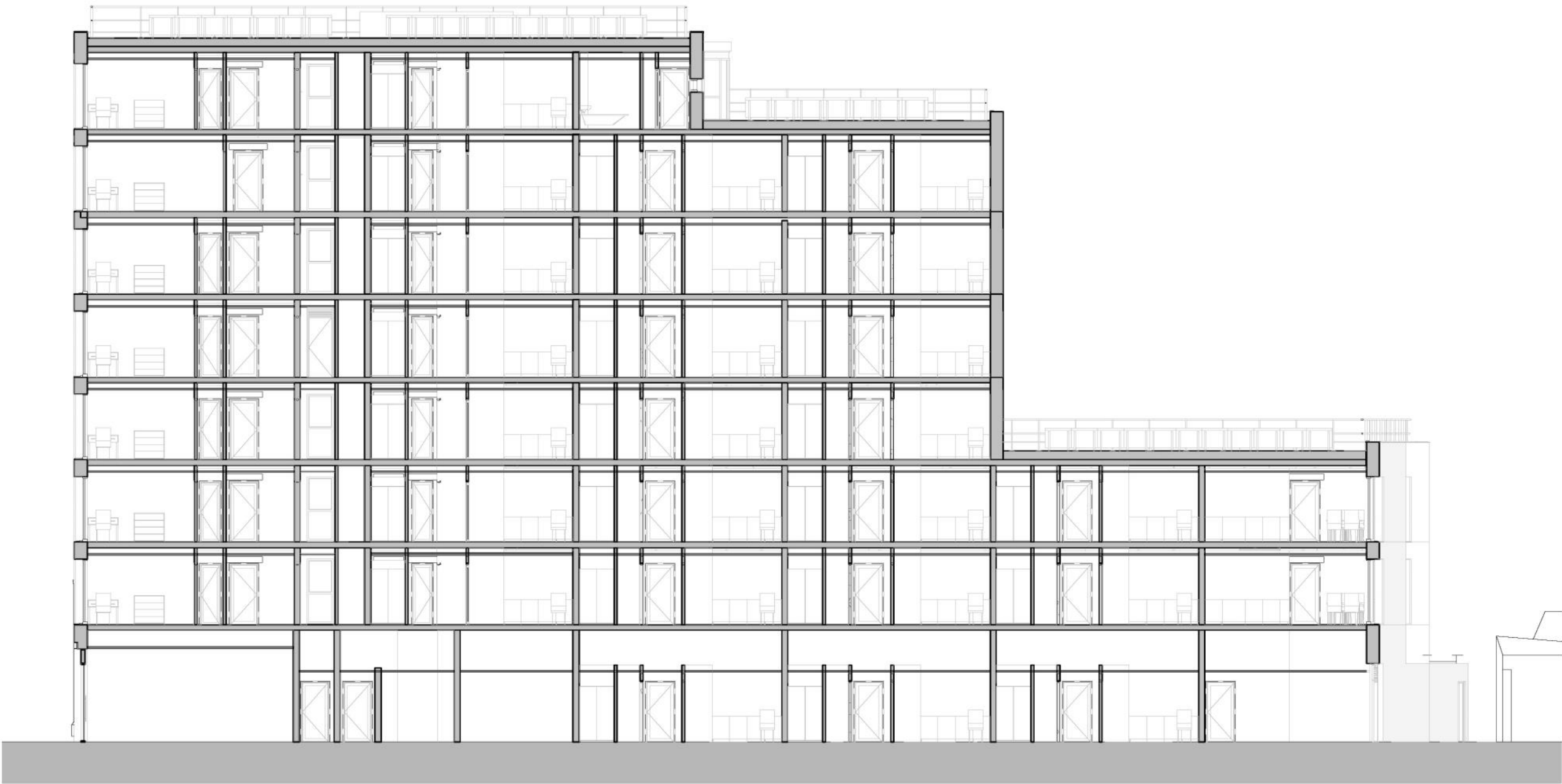
The Gaiety

Pre-Application Consultation

August 2024



# 5.0 Response to the Objectives of Good Design

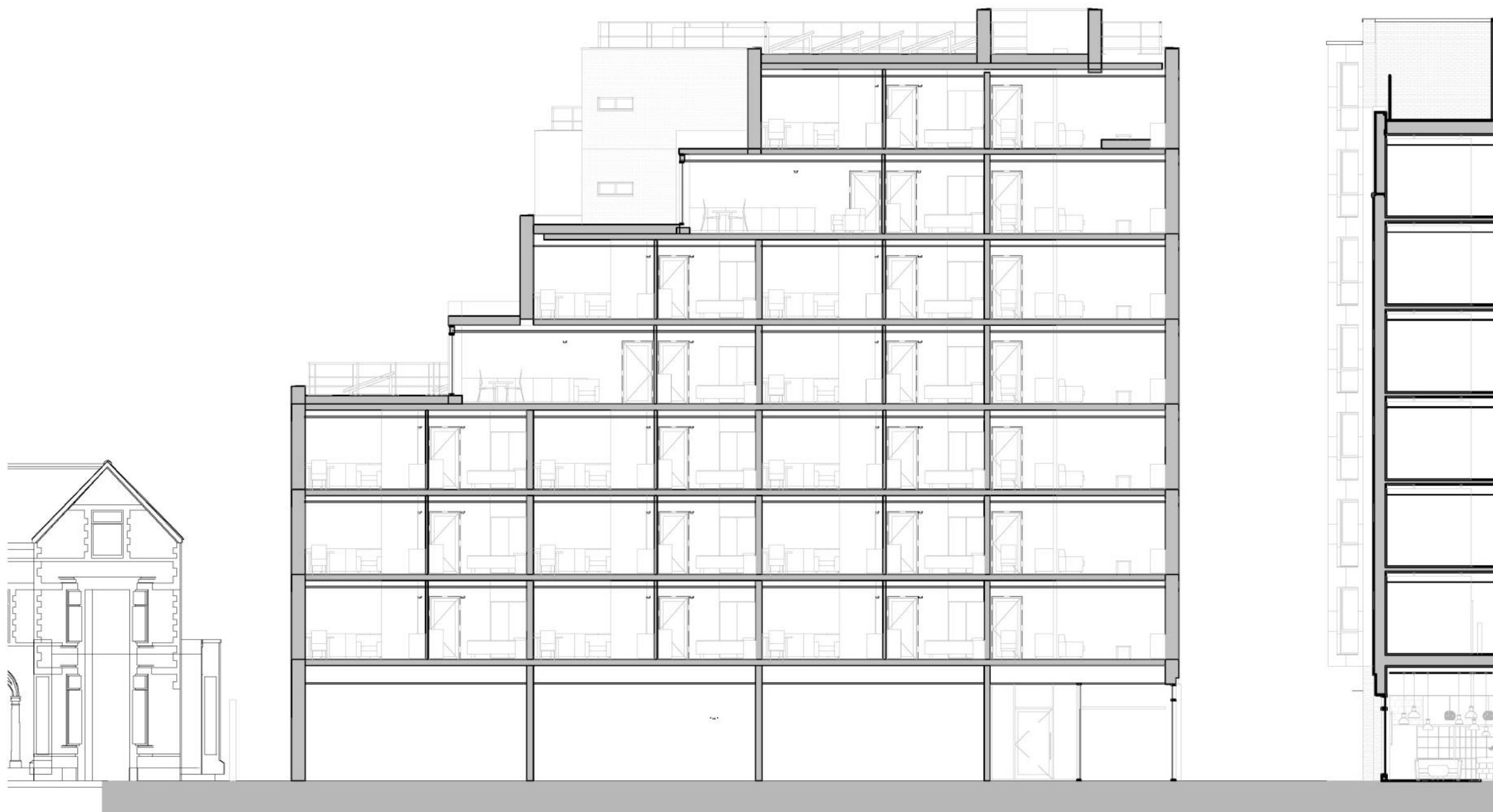


Cross Section through the Northcote Road Lane (north) 'wing'

RESPONSE TO THE  
OBJECTIVES OF  
GOOD DESIGN

Redevelopment of:  
  
**The Gaiety**  
  
Pre-Application Consultation  
  
August 2024





Cross Section through the City Road 'wing'



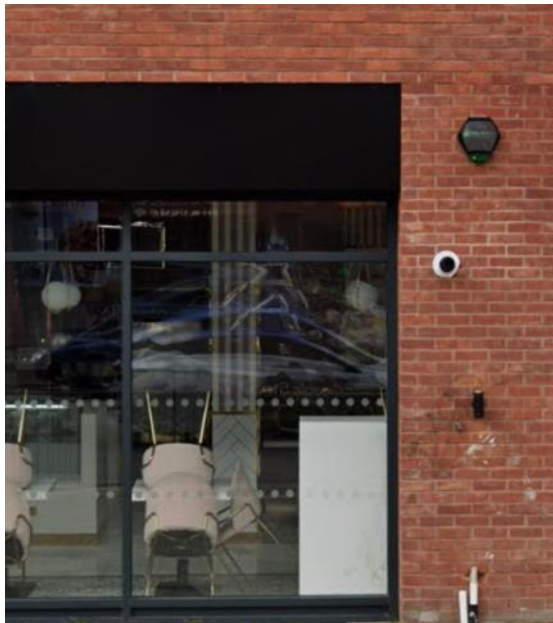
# 5.0 Response to the Objectives of Good Design

between the front and back of the new building in general. The southern boundary frontage and the evenly stepped sections of the City Road frontage are proposed as brickwork (as a sequence of returns from the City Road frontage) but with small render inserts with projecting glass to glass corner bay windows.

5.9.14 Where fenestration is required to support spaces such as staircases, lift lobbies, entrances and corridors, as mentioned previously, either a horizontal or vertical 'strip' window with spandrel panels will be provided, or a different type of punched hole window. Colour accent through the contrast between the sections of brickwork and the sections of render together with particular components of the new building add to its visual as well as physical composition. Further interest is added, for example, through the layered connection between the City Road expressed stepped frontage 'bays' and the way that the vertical recess between them connects to the individual shopfront facias. Moreover, emphasis is given to the division between the main entrance and the commercial units through relative projection and recession of frontage.

5.9.15 The rhythmic, stepped block, nature of the City Road frontage is a direct response to the rhythmic nature of the inherent townscape of the application proposals immediate context. By separating each section of the City Road frontage into recognisable bays, through the use of a small set-back continuous vertical slot that runs from the corresponding shopfront facia to the parapet, a subtle layered arrangement is created that breaks down, and significantly reduces, the visual mass of the new building, and at the same time, adds further interest to its overall architectural composition. Moreover, in relation to the overall appearance of the new building, a (visual) balance and compositional relationship between the stepped sections of the City Road frontage and its taller section(s) - the tallest of which announces the main entrance into the building - is created. If the taller section was either too short or too tall, the balance would be wrong. The subtle height increase of 1m or so, was considered to be the most appropriate.

5.9.16 The stepped approach has also been adopted for the access lane frontage at the northern end of the site. In this case, the change is more dramatic - from 8-storeys to 3-storeys, thereby respecting the scale gradient from City Road to Northcote Street Lane (west). Similarly, but less dramatic, in the case of the southern section, the change is from 4-storeys on the City Road frontage, up to 7 and then 8-storeys, before going back (down) to 3-storeys at the rear, Northcote Street Lane (west).



Proposed (primary) materials - brick and render with large format 'punched hole' fenestration and shopfronts

Roof scape views showing the proposed bay window projections and

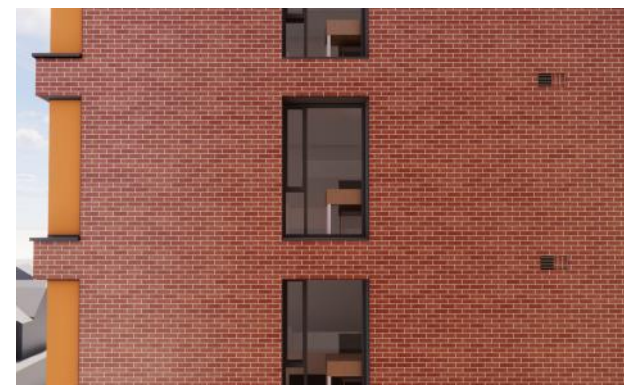
RESPONSE TO THE  
OBJECTIVES OF  
GOOD DESIGN

Redevelopment of:  
  
The Gaiety  
  
Pre-Application Consultation  
  
August 2024





and PV panels



Material(s) and component details from around the building

RESPONSE TO THE  
OBJECTIVES OF  
GOOD DESIGN

Redevelopment of:

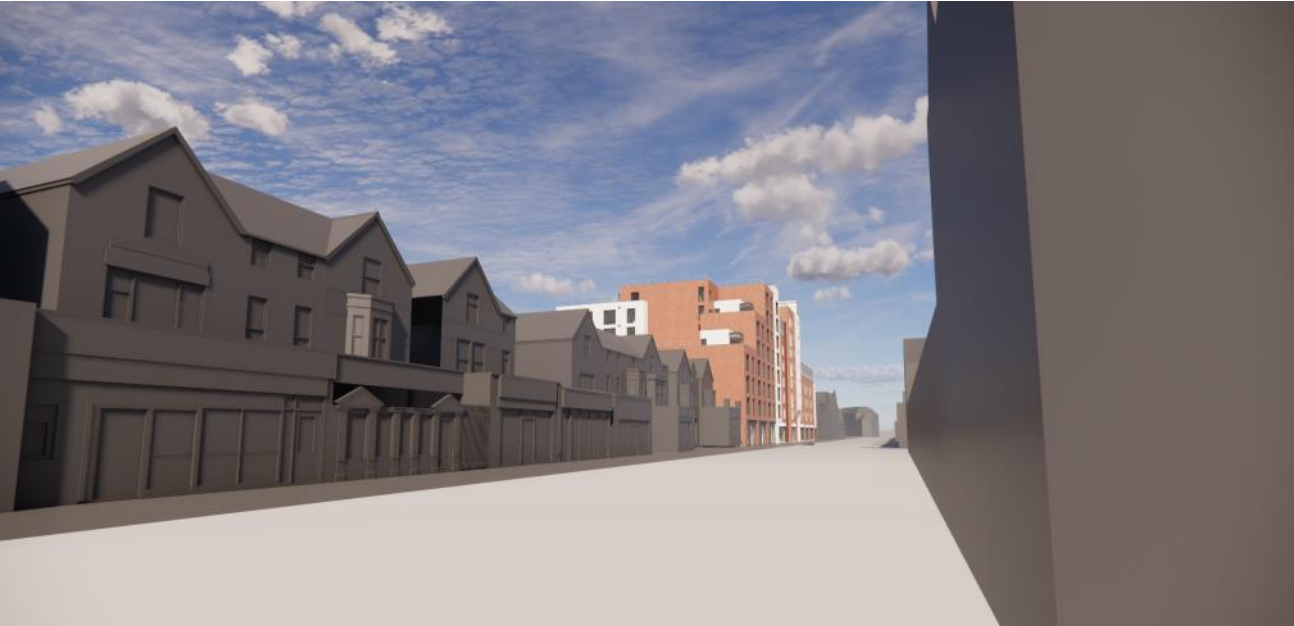
The Gaiety

Pre-Application Consultation

August 2024



5.0 Response to the Objectives of Good Design



Serial view (1) of the Application proposals looking north 'up' City Road



Serial view (2) of the Application proposals looking north 'up' City Road



Serial view (3) of the Application proposals looking north 'up' City Road

RESPONSE TO THE  
OBJECTIVES OF  
GOOD DESIGN

Redevelopment of:  
  
The Gaiety  
  
Pre-Application Consultation  
  
August 2024





Serial view (1) of the Application proposals looking south 'down' City Road



Serial view (2) of the Application proposals looking south 'down' City Road



Aerial view across City Road from the east, illustrating the 'brother and sister' relationship between the Application proposals and the existing City Heights building

RESPONSE TO THE  
OBJECTIVES OF  
GOOD DESIGN

Redevelopment of:  
  
The Gaiety  
  
Pre-Application Consultation  
  
August 2024



## 5.0 Response to the Objectives of Good Design



Aerial view looking 'up' City Road from the south



Aerial view looking 'up' Northcote Road Lane (west) from the south



Aerial view looking across Northcote Road Lane (west) and the City Heights building from the north west



Aerial view looking across City Road from the north east

RESPONSE TO THE  
OBJECTIVES OF  
GOOD DESIGN

*Redevelopment of:*

**The Gaiety**

Pre-Application Consultation

August 2024





View looking 'up' Keppoch Street from the east



View looking 'up' Glenroy Street from the east



Aerial view looking across Northcote Road Lane (west) from the west



# 5.0 Response to the Objectives of Good Design

5.9.17 In the context of the townscape of the northern end of City Road, the City Heights building has become a recognisable landmark, and in this sense, it is worth reiterating that the proposals for the new Gaiety building should be considered very much as the 'sister' to it, as 'brother'. The two buildings should also act together to reinforce the juncture and 'pause point' between City Road and Northcote Street Lane (north) as well as the transition at the southern (Gaiety building) end between the new building and the adjacent properties (going south), through to the northern (City Heights building) end between City Heights and the adjacent properties (going north).

## 5.10 LANDSCAPING

- 5.10.1 Within the site, it is proposed that the internal, south-facing open courtyard will be a mix of hard and soft landscaping components. It will however, be predominantly soft landscaping through the inclusion of a SuDS rain garden feature.
- 5.10.2 Outside the site it is proposed that the extended areas of public realm that face onto City Road, the widened sections of Northcote Street Lane (north) and the individual ground floor apartment unit forecourts that face towards Northcote Street Lane (north) - as their 'defensible space' - will all be both hard and soft landscaping.

## 5.11 ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- 5.11.1 The requirement(s) for sustainable buildings has long been absorbed into the Building Regulations, and in this regard, the application proposals will seek to fully comply, thus ensuring its 'base' energy efficiency.
- 5.11.2 At a fundamental level, the application proposals, through the re-development of a redundant and derelict building, on brown-field land in central Cardiff, within close proximity to essential services, amenities and facilities, as well as, convenient access to established cycle networks, pedestrian routes, and, public transport nodes - both bus and train - the Gaiety situation represents a highly sustainable form of (new)

development.

5.11.3 Also, at a fundamental level, due consideration has been given to the orientation of the new building. The site, by default, is disposed north / south and east / west, which in turn means that, there is an inevitability that the internal layout and configuration of the new building's design will have to recognise that, to create positive city scape, urban frontage and opportunities for natural surveillance to the adjacent public realm, a percentage of the apartment units, will have a north facing aspect. The number of apartment units with habitable rooms that do face north, have however, been kept to a practicable minimum.

5.11.4 The application proposals have evolved with due consideration to the environmental aspects of good design. The all aspect nature of the new building's situation (directly north / south, east / west) means that certain sections will face south and hence are exposed to some welcome solar gain - this will also be the case for certain east and west facing sections as they will also benefit from direct solar gain, particularly in the Spring and Autumn when the sun is lower. The three sections of roof on the Northcote Street Lane (north) block all present an ideal opportunity for the installation of (directly south facing) photo voltaic panels. The majority of the apartments within the residential block(s) have either a south, east or west aspect - there is however an inevitability, given the 'L' shaped plan configuration of inter-connected blocks that certain apartment units will face north (as mentioned previously) - these have been kept to a minimum. Amenity spaces within the new building will encourage social interaction, well-being, health and fitness activities and recreational pursuits. The rear (private) open courtyard, for example, faces south (and to a modest extent, west), providing opportunities for sitting out in the sun and general well-being.



Typical secure cycle store with 'green' roof

RESPONSE TO THE  
OBJECTIVES OF  
GOOD DESIGN

Redevelopment of:  
  
The Gaiety  
  
Pre-Application Consultation  
  
August 2024

Landscape and SUD's plan



5.11.5 During the design development stages of the project, consideration for specific energy efficient design measures were put into place such as: levels of thermal insulation; air tightness and ventilation (both natural and mechanical - MVHR); the appropriate form of heating (and cooling if required) the re-use of materials; recycling generally; energy efficient fixtures and fittings; and waste management.

5.12 NEIGHBOURLY ISSUES

5.12.1 The application proposals have given due regard to the avoidance of over-looking, over-shadowing and over-bearing of immediately adjacent properties, and it is considered that 'rights of light' to neighbouring properties should not be impinged. The various building sections set-backs and window positions should ensure that the visual impact of the building from key locations in the area is acceptable, and a regime of natural surveillance can exist.

5.13 REFUSE

5.13.1 The application proposals have made specific reference to both the British Standards and Cardiff Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance for Waste Collection and Storage Facilities, October 2016, in respect to the calculation of the required quantum of refuse receptacles appropriate for the size of the development, ie 70 WDQR Affordable Housing apartment units and 3 small commercial units. A chain of direct communication with the Council's waste management team has also helped to confirm the overall requirement as:

- Dry recyclables: 7 x 1100 litre bulk bins collected weekly.
- General waste: 7 x 1100 litre bulk bins collected fortnightly.
- Food waste: 4 x 240 litre bins collected weekly.
- Kitchen caddies: 70
- Bulky waste storage: 7m²

5.13.2 The refuse generated by the residents of the apartment units will be held within a dedicated refuse store located a short distance along Northcote Street Lane (north) from its junction with City Road. Council collections can be made from City Road or by reversing into Northcote Street Lane (north), which can also be used as the temporary holding area during collections.

5.13.3 Similarly, the refuse generated by the 3 small ground floor commercial units facing onto City Road will be held within a dedicated refuse area, to be located



within the passageway adjacent to the new building's southern boundary.

5.14 COMMUNITY SAFETY

5.14.1 The application proposals, wherever possible, have been designed to provide an inherent degree of natural surveillance with a view to deterring crime, whilst ensuring the security of residents through suitable boundary treatments. In this way, residents are able to assume a level of ownership.

5.14.2 The new building's main entrance, as well as its secondary (resident and / or communal) entrances, will be fully secured with access only available to residents or authorised persons by keypad or fob control or similar.

5.14.3 In terms of the specific form of the new building, the materials that have been selected are robust,

particularly at lower levels where the chances of damage are greater. Recessed spaces where people can loiter have been minimised, however where they are unavoidable, it is suggested that specific use of CCTV and / or enhanced lighting will be installed.

5.14.4 The application proposals aim to adhere to the concepts set out in Secured By Design (SBD) - the UK Police flagship initiative supporting the principles of designing out crime.

5.14.5 The new building represents an important part of the evolving regeneration of the northern end of City Road, and indeed, City Road in general. Its design has taken account of community safety issues and will offer high levels of safety and security with a view to helping to create a low crime risk environment to its residents and staff. This will be achieved by the following:

- The widening of Northcote street Lane (north).
- The inclusion of design features which avoid

View of the City Road / Northcote Road Lane corner

- creating recesses and hidden areas that cannot be over-looked or monitored.
- Design that maximises natural surveillance.
- The incorporation of strategically located lighting schemes to deter crime.
- The incorporation of CCTV systems to deter crime, as appropriate.
- The use of appropriate (robust) materials and internal /external street furniture features.
- The inclusion of a secure cycle storage facility.
- Safe and secure housing to Secured by Design (SBD) standards.
- Consideration of Police advice in relation to crowded places.
- Management plan in relation to premises.

5.14.6 Further details in respect of some of the above issues such as management, lighting and CCTV, may be subject to further more specific design as part of the Application proposals next stage of detailed design.

RESPONSE TO THE OBJECTIVES OF GOOD DESIGN

Redevelopment of:  
  
The Gaiety  
  
Pre-Application Consultation  
  
August 2024



# 6.0 Planning

## 6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.1.1 The application proposals for the redevelopment of the Gaiety building at the northern end of City Road have been cognisant of the various aspects of current planning policy framework that are applicable to the evolution of the scheme.

## 6.2 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

6.2.1 The following planning policies, aspects of the local development plan and supplementary planning guidance are applicable to the application proposals:

### Planning Policy Wales, Edition 12 (February 2024):

- Technical Advice Notes (TANs):
- TAN11 Noise
- TAN12 Design

### Cardiff Local Development Plan (January 2016):

- KP1 Level of Growth
- KP5 Good Quality and Sustainable Design
- KP6 New Infrastructure
- KP8 Sustainable Transport
- KP12 Waste
- EN13 Air, Noise, Light Pollution and Land Contamination
- R4 District Centres
- T1 Walking and Cycling
- T5 Managing Transport Impacts
- T6 Impact on Transport Networks and Services
- C3 Community Safety/Creating Safe Environments
- W2 Provision for Waste Management Facilities in Development

### Supplementary Planning Guidance:

- Waste Collection and Storage Facilities (October 2016)
- Tall Buildings (January 2017)
- Residential Design Guide (January 2017)
- Location Waste Management Facilities (January 2017)

## 6.3 COMMENTARY

6.3.1 The various sections of this DaAS address the relevant policies and guidance in respect of such practical matters as sustainable travel; walking, cycling and managing transport impacts; community safety and creating safe environments and provision for waste

management facilities.

6.3.2 Accompanying reports and plans address matters such as acoustics; daylight and sunlight impacts, landscaping, green infrastructure, biodiversity, and foul and surface water sustainable drainage.

6.3.3 The principal policy considerations arise from PPW advice on housing and the interpretation and application of LDP policy K5.

6.3.4 The scheme has been the subject of detailed discussions with Welsh Government pursuant to the RSLs identification of the community’s need in the context of this central location. The scheme, which is a rental affordable housing scheme, is aimed at and designed with a particular clientele in mind. In this respect PPW advises:

*A community’s need for affordable housing is a material planning consideration which must be taken into account in formulating development plan policies and determining relevant planning applications.*

6.3.5 In the context of this particular site, the following PPW guidance is also relevant:

*Maximising the use of suitable previously developed and/or under-utilised land for housing development can assist regeneration and at the same time relieve pressure for development on greenfield sites.*

6.3.6 The site was recognised as derelict by City Council officers in the committee officer report prepared for the adjacent City Heights scheme. It was said:

*Contrary to some of the views expressed through the consultation, the former Gaiety Cinema is not a statutory Listed Building. Whilst the tallest element of the development is immediately adjacent, the building is currently vacant and derelict and has attracted anti-social behaviour and vandalism for a number of years. By bringing back into new and beneficial use the adjacent site, it is hoped that a new development/ appropriate use for the Gaiety site is more likely to be forthcoming.*

6.3.7 The Gaiety site has remained vacant and derelict for several years since the City Heights building was completed. It is clearly previously developed land and the development would assist greatly in assisting with the regeneration of this part of City Road, entirely in accordance with national policy and advice.

6.3.8 Turning to issues of design, it is as well to recall the content of the officer report on the City Heights



development, wherein the proposal was considered having regard to the provisions of LDP policy KP. It said the following:

*The current plans have reduced the height of the building proposed from 10 to 8 storeys (max) with reduced height across the main City Road frontage creating a more appropriate relationship with adjacent buildings.*

*Whilst it is accepted that the scale of the development is greater than those existing buildings along this northern section of city road, it is accepted that the size of the plot, the further potential for development of the former Gaiety Cinema site immediately to the south, and the location opposite the junction of Glenroy Street, all give credence to the potential for a taller building at this location.*





*It is further noted that the site and adjacent (Gaiety) site are currently vacant within an area which has suffered from dereliction and consequential anti-social behaviour for a number of years.*

*The scale of development to the rear lane is acceptable, being 3 storey wings equivalent in scale to existing buildings., Setting back the taller elements of the main frontage to within acceptable separation distances, and*

*limiting the scale of the wings to three storeys, addresses the concerns neighbouring residents Richmond Road in terms of overlooking and overshadowing.*

*The creation of additional distance (setting the building back from the existing side lane) and the introduction of angled windows allows for an acceptable aspect from those units, without compromising future development of*

*the adjacent site. (ie The Gaiety – our addition).*

6.3.9 This level of positivity towards the City Heights scheme, and the recognition of the need for further similar development on the Gaiety site has not, unfortunately, reflected itself in pre-application discussions with officers, who appeared to want to re-write history.

6.3.10 The design rationale and evolution of the scheme is explained in great detail in the DAS. The basic philosophy followed was to design a 'sister' scheme sitting harmoniously with that which already exists on the adjoining site. It is believed that has been achieved.

6.3.11 Consequently, it is considered that all the relevant criteria of LDP K5 are either met or achieved.

## SUMMARY

*Redevelopment of:*

**The Gaiety**

Pre-Application Consultation

August 2024



# 6.0 Summary

SUMMARY

Redevelopment of:  
  
The Gaiety  
  
Pre-Application Consultation  
  
August 2024

6.0 SUMMARY

6.1 This Design and Access Statement (DaAS) has been prepared to accompany a submission that includes a suite of Drawings and various Technical and Design Reports (by others). The application proposals represent the design of a new WDQR compliant Affordable Housing residential apartment building that comprises: 70, primarily 1-bedroom apartment units, with associated front and back-of-house amenity, management and service spaces, a private residents rear landscaped open courtyard, secure storage for 74 cycles, plus 3 small (City Road fronting) commercial units.

6.2 The application site is an important part of the continuing regeneration (and renaissance) of the northern end of City Road. Through its inherent residential typology and ground floor frontage commercial uses, it will positively contribute to the enduring vibrancy of this colourful, eclectic and diverse part of Cardiff.

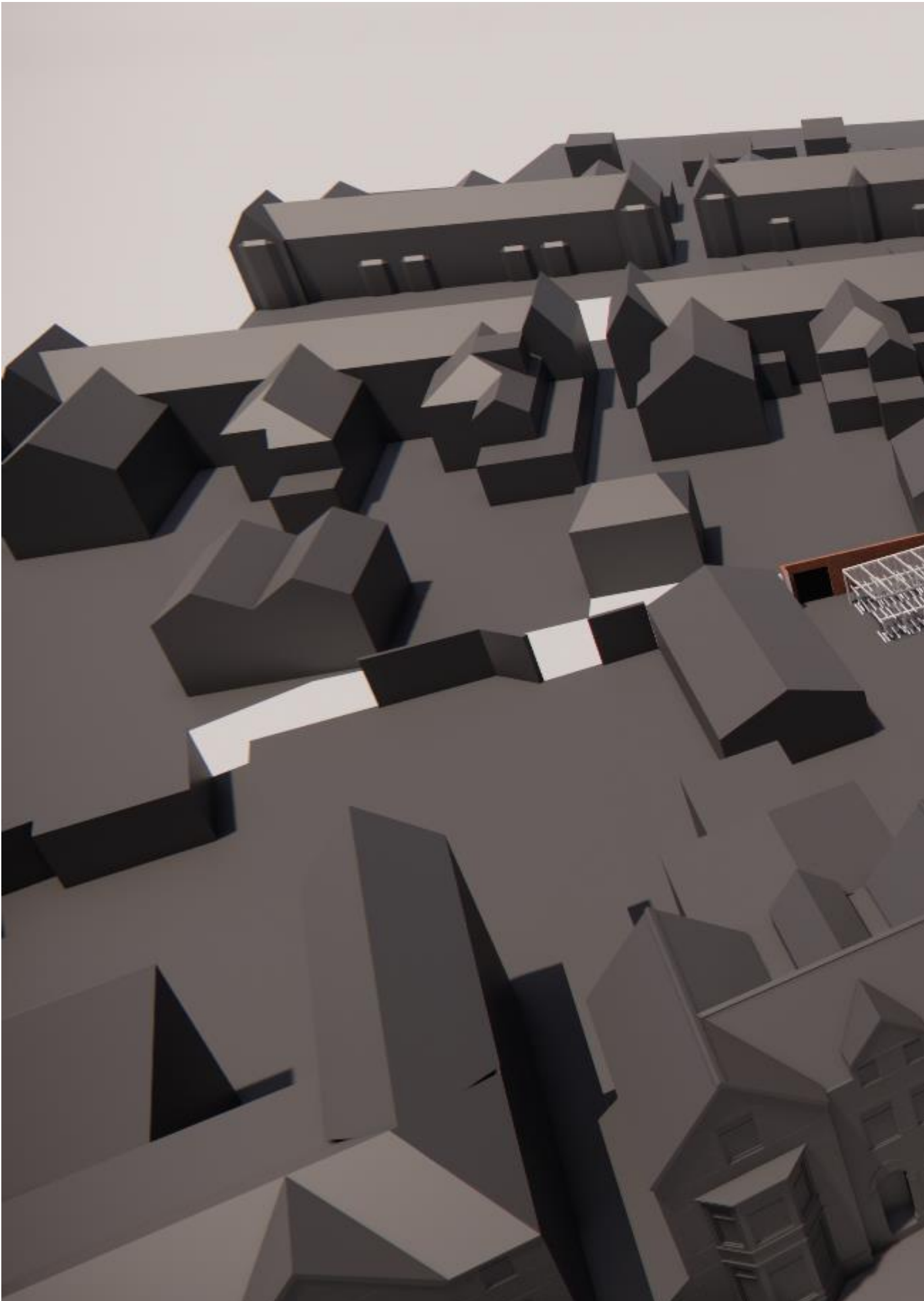
6.3 The application proposals present an elegant, well-proportioned stepped building form, with a simple, well-mannered, rigorous, rhythmic and positively layered composition of masonry (brickwork and render) to window curtain walling and screening openings. Together with the various areas of ‘active’ street frontage, the new building will offer a complementary addition to the street scene and townscape of the northern end of City Road and its immediate context, as well as a welcome addition to the on-going development of Cardiff’s urban fabric.

6.4 As described in the preceding sections of this DaAS, the application proposals are a direct design response to their given situation and briefing. The design has evolved to ensure that the maximum development potential offered by the site has been fulfilled, its floor plans, sections and elevations are disposed and configured to ensure that the most responsive and robust resolution to the briefing has been determined and delivered, and that, its three-dimensional qualities are attractive and full of visual interest and delight in relation to both the architectural and urban design aspirations set by the project as a whole.

6.5 The application proposals accord with the objectives of good sustainable design and will integrate effectively with the surrounding land use context. In addition, they will not detrimentally impact upon any other matters of acknowledged importance, and, mitigation measures will be introduced to safeguard its integrity as necessary.

6.6 In light of the above, it is considered that the application proposals fully accord with both national and local policies and there are no material considerations which should prevent their positive support during the determination process period in accordance with the relevant planning policy framework.

6.7 Importantly, the application proposals will help to fulfil the acute need for good quality affordable homes, in particular, the need for suitable accommodation for single people.



Aerial view looking across City Road from the south east





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