

Was This The Worst Planning Application In City's History?

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Was this the worst planning application in Cardiff's history?

City planners have launched a vitriolic attack on a copper, bronze and stainless-steel clad 20-storey tower planned for the centre of Cardiff.

In their report to councillors, officials described the £30m plans put forward by a London-based real-estate investment firm as "overbearing, over intensive and congested".

They added that the planned tower next to the Capitol Centre, Queen Street, Cardiff, was "un-neighbourly", would rob nearby residents of privacy, and was "incongruous", "unsympathetic" and "harmful to the surrounding environment".

It was not even the type of project the officials wanted for the site where the Odeon cinema closed in 2001.

"Disjoined, discordant and unsatisfactory," they added.

Continuing their demolition of the proposals put forward by the reputable London firm the Moorfield Group, the officers concluded the application failed to meet a litany of planning guidelines:

Not enough affordable housing;

No suitable open space;

A lack of community facilities;

Too much car parking for shoppers;

Not enough cycle spaces for residents; and

The scheme had failed to properly consider transport access.

Scores of residents and external groups also objected to the 164-apartment project, which was initially acclaimed as "a magnet for investment" when the Echo revealed the plans in January this year.

Cardiff Bus highlighted a series of errors in the application and said it failed to consider the changes to bus routes when the St David's 2 development was opened.

A spokesman said: "Given the traffic congestion caused by the existing Capitol car park, any increase in capacity will only exacerbate this problem, something which must simply not be allowed to occur given the importance Churchill Way will soon have for bus operation."

Even The Design Commission Wales was unimpressed, describing the design by architects Powell Dobson as "overcomplicated" and saying its panel had been "disappointed by the low ambition for sustainability".

The application was formally opposed by Cardiff council but has already been scheduled for a public inquiry expected to start on October 28 this year.

The developer, a real-estate investment firm set up by former real-estate experts at investment bank Goldman Sachs, did not respond to the Echo's request for a comment.

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