

Report Title: Bothwell Street Hotel & Office Development, Glasgow
Issue Date: 14th December 2007
Client/Developer: European Development Company (Hotels) Ltd
Lead Designer: SMC Jenkins & Marr
Local Authority: Glasgow City Council
Location: Glasgow
Planning Ref: 07/02673/DC
Details: Proposals for a city centre hotel and office development incorporating a 5 star, 300 bedroom hotel and conference facility and office accommodation in central Glasgow



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INTRODUCTION

This report relates to a current planning application for a hotel and office development. Preliminary designs were presented to an A+DS Design Review panel on 31 July 2007. The designs have not changed in any significant manner since that date. The views expressed in this report are therefore based on those expressed in the earlier restricted report, dated 17 August 2007.

A+DS VIEWS

1. General comments

1.1 The redevelopment of this city block has the potential to serve as a catalyst for improvements to a wider area, and activate a part of the city that has become uninviting to pedestrians. We welcome the intention to enliven Bothwell Street; however, we have a number of concerns about the design.

2. Public realm / activation of street level

2.1 There is a large amount of dead frontage at street level, particularly along the south, east and west elevations. The corners at the base of the buildings have a civic importance in announcing the arrival or departure from the city centre / motorway. These areas, at least, should be inhabited and activated to offer life and interest to the streetscape.

2.2 Typically the east/west streets within the city grid tend to invite pedestrian use, with buildings serviced from a mid block lane. The façade facing Waterloo Street requires greater activation to encourage the possibility of pedestrian activity in this area. Opportunities may also exist to increase permeability through the block and access the raised plinth from this lower level.

2.3 We question the necessity of a footbridge over Waterloo Street, and urge the City Council, along with the project team, to consider how this proposal can integrate with a masterplan for the regeneration of the area south of Waterloo Street. Such a masterplan should promote better north/south pedestrian linkages at street level.

3. Central court

3.1 We question whether the central court can be described as a public space. It is more correctly a semi public forecourt that will be activated mostly by the users of the buildings. Being north facing the space will be overshadowed, and we encourage the creation of a south facing court. If the City accepts that this cannot be achieved, then further consideration should be given to improving the daylighting of this area, through angled curtain walling or other reflective devices.

3.2 We acknowledge that the client's brief for many of the function spaces requires them to be internalised. We note however, that the way in which the building is organised in plan means that they could be naturally lit, and recommend that this be explored.

4. Architectural expression

4.1 We suggest that further consideration could be given to how different functions are expressed in the elevational treatments. Further information is required to illustrate how the building meets the sky, and how plant is handled.

4.2 We cautiously welcome the bold lighting strategy proposed for the building, and recommend it should be appropriate to its civic importance and location.

CONCLUSION

We welcome the intention to enliven Bothwell Street and to do something different with the building. We have concerns about the amount of dead frontage at street level, and the quality of the central court. We also urge the City to further consider how this project might be integrated into the regeneration of the wider area.

We are very disappointed that there have been no alterations to the design since we reviewed the project at pre-application stage. We trust that our comments can now be taken into consideration in the development of the designs, and look forward to seeing how they progress.

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