

Report Title: Paramount Building, Glasgow
Issue Date: 22 August 2007
Client/Developer: Duddingston House Properties
Lead Designer: Murray & Dunlop Architects
Local Authority: Glasgow City Council
Location: Glasgow
Planning Ref.: 07/04185/DC
Details: Proposals for a mixed use development of the former (1930's) Paramount Cinema building in the Central Conservation Area on the East side of Glasgow



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INTRODUCTION

This report relates to a planning application for the former Renfield Street Odeon Cinema presented at an A+DS Design Review meeting held on 31st July 2007.

The project was presented by representatives of Duddingston House Properties, GVA Grimley, and Murray & Dunlop Architects.

The meeting was also attended by representatives of Glasgow City Council and Historic Scotland

A+DS VIEWS

1 General comments

We thank the project team for their clear and thorough presentation. We are generally supportive of the proposals. Our main comments relate to the height of the proposed building and the way in which it relates to its context.

2 Relationship between new and old

We support the basic concept of retaining the existing Paramount building foyer and replacing the brick auditorium with a new office block. The way in which the foyer building and new block are expressed as two distinct buildings is understood. We support the way in which the designs link the two elements together externally. However, the layout of the internal spaces does not equally reflect this. We wonder whether there might benefit, for example, in providing a route between the buildings at ground level or by using the roof of the foyer building as a roof terrace. The box which projects from the office block over the foyer building appears incongruous, and we wonder whether it is necessary.

3 Height

An increase in height towards the corner of West Nile Street and West Regent Street can be supported in principle. However, we are not convinced by the justification for the proposed height of the building, both in terms of the cityscape and in relation to the proposed buildings in the immediate vicinity. It would be helpful to see the building in the context of these other planned developments to establish how it would relate to its surroundings in the future.

We note the variation in height of the other buildings on West Nile Street. However, there does not seem to be any guidance to determine an acceptable height for buildings in this area, or to identify situations where that height might be exceeded. The Council needs to provide a lead on this issue.

4 Office block facade

The idea of the 'memory veil' as a way of reinventing the façade to West Regent Street and West Nile Street is an interesting one, but warrants further design development. We welcome the proposed improvements to the public realm and the creation of a sheltered space, to be achieved by setting the façade of the proposed main office block back from the original building line. However, we feel that the proposed structure that would support this should be more robust in form and in the way it connects to the pavement. The detailing and selection of materials for this area will be critical to its success.

CONCLUSION

Although generally supportive of the designs, we do have reservations with regard to the height of the new block. We would require to be more convinced of the necessity of such a large development on this site in particular.

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