

LOCAL MEMBERS OBJECTION

COMMITTEE DATE: 23/11/2016

APPLICATION No. **16/01740/MJR** APPLICATION DATE: 29/07/2016

ED: **CATHAYS**

APP: TYPE: Conservation Area Consent

APPLICANT: Cardiff University

LOCATION: 46-48 PARK PLACE, CATHAYS PARK, CARDIFF, CF10 3BB

PROPOSAL: PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT OF NO.'S 46 TO 48 PARK PLACE FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF CARDIFF UNIVERSITY'S CENTRE FOR STUDENT LIFE

RECOMMENDATION : That Conservation area Consent be **GRANTED**, subject to the following conditions:

1. C05 Statutory Time Limit – Conservation Area Consent
2. No demolition shall be commenced until such time as Cardiff University can evidence to the Council that the site will be redeveloped for a scheme for which planning permission has been granted within twelve months of the date of the demolition of the buildings on the land.
Reason: Demolition of the structures, which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area, would not in isolation be acceptable; and to mitigate against the potential that such demolition to realise an undeveloped gap site within the conservation area.
3. No works to which this consent relates shall commence until an appropriate programme of historic building recording and analysis has been secured and implemented in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: As the building is of architectural and cultural significance the specified records are required to mitigate impact.

1. **DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT**

- 1.1 Cardiff University wish to build a 'Centre for student life' [CSL] in an iconic building immediately east of the Civic Centre opposite the University Main Building on Park Place.
- 1.2 The development would necessitate the demolition of a small outbuilding and Villa at 46 Park Place, it's high stone walled garden enclosure, the access steps to the Student Union, and numbers 47 and 48 Park Place (the former Registry Office).

Conservation Area Consent is sought for the demolition of the buildings.

2. **DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE**

- 2.1 The site currently contains the former Registry Office building (An extended and altered Victorian building now providing a Subway and Costa Coffee Offer); the access steps to the student union; and the substantial walled curtilage of 46 Park Place which contains a number of mature trees, and the Villa itself (1875) and it's ancillary outbuilding. The site varies in depth from around 47m at its south eastern end, to around 17m at its North western extreme.
- 2.2 The former University Gym (A tall 1920s brick built building) bounds an access lane to the northwest of 48 Park Place. To the Southeast of 46 Park Place are further 2/3 storey Villas principally in commercial office use, or providing accommodation for University research facilities.
- 2.3 To the northeast, the site is bounded by the Valleys railway line, and the Sherman Theatre and Student union building on Senghenydd Road. The student union building is a dominating brown brick building of 1970s construction and is easily viewed and accessed from Park Place via a stepped access which spans the railway line, also required to be demolished under this application.
- 2.4 To the northwest is the Park Place carriageway, a tree lined avenue, of predominantly mature Lime trees, and the University Main building (1903 – 1964) A Grade II* Listed building finished in Portland Stone, with an open courtyard enclosed by railings from Park Place.

3. **SITE HISTORY**

- 3.1 Conservation Area Consent has notably been granted for the demolition of the wall, steps and Villa at 46 Park Place to allow for the construction of a new University Building some 17 years ago in 1999.
- 3.2 A separate permission later in 1999 granted consent for the demolition of a number of extensions and adaptations to 46 Park Place which was implemented and results in the remaining more original building which survives today.

99/00031 Conservation Area Consent for
DEMOLITION OF THE TWO ORIGINAL SEMI-DETACHED
HOUSES, THE STABLE BLOCK, THE GARDEN WALL AND
THE ACCESS STAIRCASE at 46/46a Park Place
Granted 10/06/1999

99/-2038 DEMOLITION OF EXTENSIONS AND OUTBUILDINGS TO
LEAVE MAIN HOUSE AND COACH HOUSE AS SHOWN ON
ATTACHED PLANS.
Granted 10-02-2000

4. **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

4.1 Planning Policy Wales Edition 8, January 2016

Chapter 6 - Conserving the Historic Environment

4.2 WG Technical Advice Notes

TAN 12: Design (2009)

4.3 Welsh Office Circulars

1/98: Planning and the Historic Environment: Directions by the Secretary of State for Wales 02/02/98

61/96: Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas 05/12/96

60/96: Planning and the Historic Environment: Archaeology 05/12/96

4.4 Other Material Considerations

Cardiff Local Development Plan 2006-2026 (Adopted January 2016)

KP17: BUILT HERITAGE

4.5 Other Material Considerations

Cathays Park Conservation Area Appraisal

5. **INTERNAL CONSULTEE RESPONSES**

None

6. **EXTERNAL CONSULTEE RESPONSES**

6.1 **CADW**

Cadw have confirmed that they do not consider the buildings of National Significance in terms of their Architectural/Historic interest; and have issued a certificate of immunity from Listing which will be valid for the next 5 years.

6.2 **RCAHMW**

In respect of Proposals as originally submitted

The remit of the Royal Commission permits us to comment only on the historical significance and context of a monument or structure and on the adequacy or otherwise of the record. Nos 46-48 Park Place are part of the Cathays Park Conservation area. The buildings are not listed but as later C19th domestic buildings contribute to the character of the Park Place group of historic buildings. Circular 61/96 (para 33), which is of course current advice,

is quite clear that there should be a presumption in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area. The proposals to demolish 46-48 Park Place will need to be carefully considered in the same way as proposals to demolish listed buildings.

If consent for demolition is granted, it is important to require as a condition of consent that a high-quality photographic record of the buildings is made before demolition for deposit in the National Monuments Record of Wales (the public archive of the Royal Commission).

6.3 **GLAMMORGAN AND GWENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST**

In respect of Proposals as originally submitted

The proposal has an archaeological restraint.

We note the submission of a desk-based assessment compiled by GGAT Projects (Report no. 2016/003, dated April 2016) in support of the application. The document assesses the archaeological resource of the proposed development area and the likely impact of the application. It indicates that there will be a severe impact on 46 and 47 Park Place, as well as on a stables/coach house associated with 46 Park Place. It also notes a minor effect on a further five sites, including Post-medieval buildings. The report recommends a building survey on 46 and 47 Park Place, as well the stables/coach house of 46 Park Place. Additionally, due to the possibility of encountering below-ground remains associated with the Post-medieval buildings, or indeed the possibility of medieval remains associated with Dobbin Pits farmstead, an archaeological watching brief should be conducted during any ground intrusion works.

We concur with the conclusions of the report and therefore, in our role as the archaeological advisors to your Members we recommended that two conditions be attached to any consent, ensuring that archaeological and architectural investigations are carried out to mitigate the impact of the proposed development.

We have no objection to the determination of the consent as long as these conditions are attached and implemented.

In order to preserve the structures (46 and 47 Park Place, as well the stables/coach house of 46 Park Place) by record, we strongly recommend that a survey is made prior to work commencing. To ensure that work is carried out in a suitable manner, we therefore suggest that a condition worded in a manner similar to model condition 73 given in Welsh Government Circular 016/2014 is attached to any consent that is granted in response to the current application. This condition is worded:-

No works to which this consent relates shall commence until an appropriate programme of historic building recording and analysis has been secured and implemented in accordance with a written

scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: As the building is of architectural and cultural significance the specified records are required to mitigate impact.

The second condition will require the applicant to submit a detailed written scheme of investigation for a programme of archaeological work to protect the archaeological resource should be attached to any consent granted by your Members. We envisage that this programme of work would take the form of a watching brief during the groundworks required for the development, with detailed contingency arrangements, including the provision of sufficient time and resources to ensure that any archaeological features or finds that are located are properly investigated and recorded; it should include provision for any sampling that may prove necessary, post-excavation recording and assessment and reporting and possible publication of the results. To ensure adherence to the recommendations we recommend that the condition should be worded in a manner similar to model condition 24 given in Welsh Government Circular 016/2014

No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured agreement for a written scheme of historic environment mitigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the local planning authority. Thereafter, the programme of work will be fully carried out in accordance with the requirements and standards of the written scheme.

Reason: To identify and record any features of archaeological interest discovered during the works, in order to mitigate the impact of the works on the archaeological resource.

We also recommend that a note should be attached to the planning consent explaining that:

The archaeological work must be undertaken to the appropriate Standard and Guidance set by Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), (www.archaeologists.net/codes/ifa) and it is recommended that it is carried out either by a CIfA Registered Organisation (www.archaeologists.net/ro) or an accredited Member.

In respect of Proposals as amended

No Change to comments

In respect of Additional Information

No Change to comments

6.4 **VICTORIAN SOCIETY**

In respect of Proposals as originally submitted

Thank you for notifying the Victorian Society of this proposal. The case has been considered by the Society's Southern Buildings Committee at its most

recent meeting, and I write now to convey our OBJECTION to the application due to the harmful impact it would have on the character and appearance of the Cathays Park Conservation Area and the setting of the Grade II*-listed main university building.

46 Park Place was constructed in 1875. It is an attractive detached Gothic revival villa of the sort that characterises the east side of Park Place and which form a group that the Conservation Area Appraisal identifies as being significant to the appearance, character and setting of the area. Number 47-48 was built in 1890 and was designed by the notable architect *Edwin Wortley Montague Corbett*. Here *Corbett* interestingly departed from the Gothic-revival villa idiom (though not the scale) that defines Park Place, producing an attractive, originally symmetrical, red-brick pair of semidetached dwellings. Extension in the 1930s was sympathetically achieved.

The coherent sense of scale achieved by these Victorian properties – and those all the way down Park Place – is significant in creating a strong boundary on the east side of Cathays Park, clearly defining its extent and that of the civic building within it. It also provides the context in which to best appreciate and experience the full splendour of the Park's civic buildings, particularly *W. D. Caroe's* Grade II*-listed main university building, with later wings completed by his son Alban.

Notwithstanding the loss of 46-48 Park Place, we also object in principle to a building of the height and manner proposed. It would introduce the scale and civic character of the grand Cathays Park edifices, which have hitherto been restricted to the west side of Park Place.

Implementation of the scheme would have a transformative impact on the Conservation Area and the setting of the main university building. It would entail the demolition of two locally significant buildings, in the process causing harm that would be further compounded by the Centre for Student Life proposed. The new building would represent an unprecedented departure from the scale, character and defining characteristics of the east side of Park Place. A recent appeal decision (ref. no. APP/Z6815/A/15/3009037) concerning 23-24 Park Place underlines both the significance of the Victorian villas on the east side of Park Place and the desirability of preserving them.

Caroe conceived the university building as a quadrangular building with a central courtyard. In this sense it was never actually completed and the hall he had envisioned for the eastern wing was never built. Later his son attempted to resolve the situation, leaving us with the present arrangement. Having considered the scheme in this context, it occurred to the Committee that perhaps the most logical approach the University could adopt would be to build a new student centre as a fourth side of the quadrangle on the west side of the road. It need not be seen necessarily as an attempt to 'complete' *Caroe's* building, but could certainly be in the spirit of it. An assessment of the important contrast and differences of scale and character between the east and west sides of Park Place point to this being a reasonable solution, one we urge the University to explore.

Implementation of this proposal would erode the strongly defined character and appearance of the Cathays Park Conservation Area and would harm the setting of one of its most significant buildings. In light of the above we object to the application and recommend that it is refused consent.

7. **REPRESENTATIONS**

Members

7.1 **Cllr Elizabeth Clark**

OBJECTION TO PLANNING APPLICATION FOR 46.47 AND 48 PARK PLACE, CARDIFF: 16/01739/MJR

I am writing to object to the current planning application for 46, 47 and 48 Park Place, Cardiff. I do not object to having a Centre for Student Life in principle. However, I feel these current designs would have such a negative impact on Park Place and the wider city that they should be radically changed. I have already expressed these views to Cardiff University.

I object to the proposals for the current design of the building on Park Place as it would result in the demolition of the historic Victorian Villas of 46, 47 and 48 Park Place. As they were built in 1875 and 1890 respectively they predate the buildings in Cathays Park, including the Cardiff University Main Building.

Cardiff has already lost too many of its historic buildings. These include Preswylfa House in Canton, Reardon Smith Court in Fairwater and the Red House pub on Ferry Road. Most recently, we have seen the Poets Corner in City Road and the University Settlement in Splott earmarked for demolition resulting in great distress and controversy.

Park Place is a conservation area. Not only would the city lose these Victorian/Edwardian buildings but demolishing these villas would result in a very dangerous precedent for Cardiff. It will send a signal that buildings in other Cardiff conservation areas are not safe and are able to be demolished. I disagree with the argument that it will not put other historic buildings in conservation areas at risk as planning applications are considered on their individual merits. Time and again I have seen Council and Planning Inspector decisions which have taken into account previous planning application judgements.

The Planning Inspector has recently stressed the importance of maintaining the Victorian Villas in Park Place. In his judgement to dismiss an appeal which proposed demolishing 23-24 Park Place on 19 June 2013 he said, "In particular, the existing building is an integral and positive element of a largely harmonious street frontage which still reflects its affluent Victorian residence origins and provides a coherent context to the adjacent public buildings and spaces."

The proposal is in breach of the Council's 2016 Local Development Plan which commits to protecting Cardiff's built heritage. Key Policy 17 says, "Cardiff's distinctive heritage assets will be protected, managed and enhanced, in particular the character and setting of its Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings, Registered Historic Landscapes, Parks and Gardens, Conservation Areas, Locally Listed Buildings and other features of local interest that positively contribute to the distinctiveness of the city".

As the proposed building is colonnaded, white, far higher than other buildings fronting Park Place, not set back and in a classical style it jars with the adjoining street scene. As the proposed building has unused atrium space, café's and shops I'm sure a design could be produced which would be less overbearing and out of context and keep the 46, 47 and 48 Park Place Victorian Villas intact. Alternatively, there are other nearby sites where a Centre for Student Life could be built.

The proposal appears to be sub-judice as it would prejudice the joint Cardiff University and Cardiff City Council commission to prepare a master-plan "for a landscape and urban design framework for the Cathays Park area". I understand that the commission, set up in November 2015, has yet to report to the Council so any planning application should be delayed until after that work is completed.

I understand that widely respected groups and people have also objected to the proposals. This includes the Cardiff Civic Society, Victorian Society members and the esteemed local historian and planner, John Hilling. It is imperative that full account be taken of their views.

Cardiff University Pre-Planning Consultation Process

I have spoken to people in Cardiff about the proposals and many feel there should have been a wider consultation and engagement process. For example, the Victorian Society wished to be invited to a formal meeting and presentation at a mutually agreeable time at an early stage by the University so that the proposals can be discussed in detail. Also, I understand that members of the local conservation group have not been informed about the proposals and some are very alarmed.

I'm also concerned that the 16 June 2016 drop-in style consultation event was only held on one day and at less than 2 weeks' notice. In addition, as it appears the proposals were only posted on the Cardiff University website on 17 June 2016, this only allowed about 2 weeks to comment as it is planned to submit the planning application in July 2016.

Conclusions

I do not object to these proposals lightly. I am pleased to have worked on many projects with Cardiff University in the past. These include various new buildings, the introduction of Additional Licensing in Cathays, various waste management systems which improved living conditions for students and the establishment of

the Student Liaison Officer position. It is important that Cardiff University always be perceived as a custodian of the city's heritage. I fear these proposals would damage that perception.

On a personal level my grandmother was one of the first women to be granted a degree by the University and later became a governor there and I have been proud of those links.

7.2 **Cllrs Weaver, Merry and Knight**

We feel that the plans are incongruous and will dramatically alter the street scene in this conservation area for the worse.

The Victorian Villas along Park place are an essential make up of this conservation area and having lost one Villa recently to accommodation status rather than maintaining offices, we feel this that this application accelerates the destruction of this heritage. Arguments can be made on the state and significance of individual Villas but it is clear that this application would remove significant Villas and continues the cumulative impact developments are having on this road.

The make up of buildings along Park Place are that the buildings sit off the main the pavement. This building does not attempt to follow this pattern on this side of the street and sits not only right along side the pavement but protrudes onto this busy pavement making access harder for those with wheelchairs or pushchairs.

The road is a magnificent gateway into the city and a development this incongruous, that closes off light and visibility. For these reasons the application should be rejected.

7.3 **Central Area Conservation Group**

We the Conservation Group object against the proposed redevelopment as follows;

By definition, we are not building Victorian houses any more. They are a des' res' and give our city it's unique character. They are integral to the look and feel of the city of Cardiff, and are one of our most important USPs. They are key to our attraction, not least to students, and are hence key to our prosperity.

Once gone, they will not come back. We will be destroying our inheritance, and future generations will look on our actions scornfully.

If it is decided to demolish the buildings, then please ensure that the decision maker puts his/her signature to the approval, so that future generations of his/her family and our city might know how he/she contributed to our city's neutered future look and feel.

Further more, the Conservation Group regrets that the regular meetings that we used to have with Officers of the Council, the Officers and meetings being

excellent, have ceased.

The Group requests that the meetings be reinstated, as they will ensure that we, as citizen custodians, act to balance understandable short-term business gain with long-term strategic guardianship of the assets and environment of our unique and beautiful city.

Thank you for your consideration. We implore you to think of our city in fifty and in one hundred years time, and reflect on what will be lost for ever if this proposal goes ahead.

There must be other ways of achieving the desired development output without the demolition of the irreplaceable gems of our unique city.

7.4 **Neighbours**

A resident of Hazelhurst Road in Llandaff North objects to the application on the grounds of the loss of “one of the few remaining historical and special properties in our City. The University is taking over too much of our beautiful City”.

Nick Russell Cardiff Resident:

Please could I raise some concerns with regard to the proposed design for the Cardiff University's Centre for Student Life.

The design in its present form encroaches on the pavement such that I do not feel there is enough room for students to walk there in any great numbers. This means that the building will push them onto the road which is a safety concern.

The proposals also include a plan to destroy a number of the 150 year old trees that line Park Place. Whilst these may not have been listed, their destruction does constitute a material change to the character of Cathays Park which is a conservation area.

Taken in isolation it may be tempting to prioritise a modernist and practical vision over the heritage considerations but what if this is just the beginning? I am concerned that if this planning application is granted it will signal the beginning of the end for Cathays Park in its current form as successive years go by. This matters, not only for reasons of Cardiff's shared cultural identity, which is very important, but also economically. Heritage tourism is a big part of the Welsh economy and Cathays Park is a part of that.

I would ask the Council in its judgement to uphold and adhere to its own rules. Cathays Park has been designated a conservation area for a reason and the people of Cardiff are looking to its leaders to preserve its character. With a little bit of creativity it must be possible to have a Centre for Student Life which keeps the trees and lets the students walk past without getting run over. The Victorian buildings planned for demolition as part of the Centre for Student Life do also have some cultural significance too. For example, I believe I have seen a pathé video of King George VI on Park Place during his visit to Cardiff in 1937 with these buildings in the background. I would like to see them preserved but if

they are to be lost it would be better to if the new building could be in keeping, at least in some small measure, to the Victorian architecture that characterises Cathays Park. Ideally I would like to see:

The Victorian buildings currently planned for demolition preserved in their entirety

The 150 year old trees currently planned for demolition preserved in their entirety

A design that does not force the students into the road and instead leaves enough pavement left over to pass safely as a group of pedestrians, which they are entitled to do.

A design that is in keeping with the Victorian architectural tradition of Cathays Park.

John Hilling [Cardiff Resident and established and respected practitioner and commentator on historical architecture]

I am an architect (retired) and past member of the Town Planning Institute. As the author of 'The History and Architecture of Cardiff Civic Centre', recently published (May, 2016) by the University of Wales Press.

My main concern is the detrimental effect that the proposed building would have on Cardiff's wonderful civic centre. I therefore wish to object to current proposal for Cardiff's University's Centre for Student Life, in Park Place, on the following grounds:

1. The proposed building is unnecessarily intrusive and will visually detract from the civic centre. The civic centre, which is the finest in Britain and architecturally of international significance, is a discrete area of public buildings around an internal park. The civic centre relies for effect on a number of features, such as scale, overall use of Portland stone, classicism, and contrast to its surroundings, i.e., greenery on south and west borders; domestic scale, mostly residential, on north and east. The Student Life building as proposed would seriously impact in an intrusive way on the eastern periphery of the civic centre.

2. The eastern side of Park Place mostly comprises two-storey, red-brick domestic buildings with pitched roofs of slate. The newer University buildings, though not domestic, do not seriously upset the balance when seen from either the north or the south. The result is a generally continuous line of buildings of reddish buildings on the east side of Park Place which is in contrast to and accentuates both the whiteness and the form of the civic centre. The proposed Student Life building would negate this contrast by removing three buildings (nos. 46, 47 & 48) and a number of trees and imposing a new building of entirely different character, thereby breaking the existing line of buildings.

3. The proposed Student Life building would be too dominant and overbearing an intrusion, as it would stand forward of the existing buildings in Park Place

(which are generally set back from the pavement), and be considerably higher and of an altogether different character.

4. The proposed Student Life building would compete too arrogantly with the main building of the university, by being too close and having a restless architectural character derived from over-glazing and a multitude of spindly columns (in-situ concrete on the drawings, but precast in the text !).

5. Because of the way that the proposed Student Life building squeezes out from the main line of building on the east side of Park Place, it might suggest that part of the civic centre has leaped across the road to mingle with the red-brick buildings of Park Place's eastern side. This would seriously diminish the visual appearance of the civic centre which partly relies on its feeling of being a discrete self-contained community.

A resident of Wyncliffe Gardens, Pentwyn

Objects to the destruction of Victorian houses and trees along Park Place, that Enhance the approach to the city, and their replacement with a building that is out of character with it's neighbours. Additionally the proposed building is very high and would overwhelm the surrounding Victorian buildings.

A resident of Pommergelli Road, Llandaff North

I note the recent public realm plans and letter regarding the potential use of the land between the University's main building and the Museum.

These do not materially affect the objections from myself and others that the building is out-of keeping with it's context, much too high and involves the complete demolition of some of Park Place's most visually impressive Victorian houses. Most of the points of my objection (made against application 16/01740/MJR - which appears to be a duplicate of this application) to have, therefore, not been addressed.

The recent proposals do, however, go a small way towards addressing the existing problems this part of Park Place has for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users. Following the success of the recent "car free day", I see no reason why Park Place along the entire frontage of Main Building should not be tabled, narrowed and closed to private cars.

The proposals make an attempt to mitigate for the loss of the green space lost by the demolition of the walled garden and loss of mature trees by formalising the existing green space between the University's main building and the Museum. However, this attempt itself involves the further removal of mature trees.

A more realistic mitigation would be to restore the Main building car park to gardens. This would have the advantage of further removing the need for private vehicles to travel along the tabled section of Park Place and reducing the current danger posed by vehicles turning into and out of Main building.

Finally I agree with other objectors that creating a Centre for Student Life by joining the two wings of Main Building around a central quadrangle as envisaged by its original architects would be a far more fitting proposal

A resident of 10 Algernon Road, London NW6 6PU

As a active member of the students union and athletics union during my time at Cardiff University ('14), I know first hand the benefit this will bring to students. This is a chance to to lead the way in student welfare. Not only in the UK but across the world. The street views look excellent. I would be proud to see this in the city. Due to the large roof space I would like to see more solar cells and an eco roof. Maybe a drone pad to make it fit for future.

A resident of 19 Franklen Road, Whitchurch, Caerdydd

My main concern is that the proposed structure overpowers the stretch of Park Place that it sits along. The structure should sit a little back from the road as currently happens with the buildings currently there. Computer generated visuals from different vantage points along Park Place make this clear.

I was unable to attend the consultation meetings held at the university, however the report from those meetings makes it clear that others have the same concerns:

"Concern about impact of new building on character of Park Place in terms of length and strong form of the building questioned whether there is a way of softening the frontage"

My view is that the frontage is out of proportion to the setting. If the structure were to be sited a few metres further back (from the standard pavement/walkway) with realistic space for some trees to grow up in front, then the whole feel of the building in relation to the other buildings and road will be much better.

The new building for the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama is a particularly good design, but it looks even better because of the proportionate way it is set back from the road. Clearly there is less space from 46-48 Park Place, but it seems that a desire to maximise the internal dimensions is pushing the building too close to the road.

7.5 MIND Cymru

AMOSSHE, the Student Services Organisation, carried out research this year which found that 80% of student services directors had seen a noticeable increase in student mental health crises over the previous two years, and three-quarters had worked on an increased number of student suicides.

It is important that universities engage with students and the wider community, encourage people to talk about mental health and remove stigma for those who are experiencing poor mental health. We know young people are increasingly willing to talk about mental health. Student engagement in mental health support at universities across the country is also increasing. It is critically

important that students are able to access support services when they need them, both in the community and in our universities, to ensure that they have the best possible student experience.

Cardiff University's Centre for Student Life will enable the University to transform the range of ways students can access services. It will improve access to mental health support through providing new public engagement space for student support services, new group work space and a purpose-built counselling and wellbeing consultation suite. These rooms will allow much greater access to students with increased opening hours and a greater range of services provision linking mental health support to other areas such as careers.

The Centre for Student Life will transform the way student support services in Cardiff work to better meet the needs of the clients they serve. But it will also provide the city with an exemplar building for this type of work at the heart of the city and the civic centre, a very public commitment to de-stigmatising mental health. As a result we hope the University will improve the student experience both in Cardiff and after graduation for students who experience poor mental health. The building and the services that operate from it represent placing the student experience, and in particular the services that support the experience of the most vulnerable students, at the centre of the University.

7.6 **Victorian Society Wales Group**

The new Centre for Student Life does not respond positively to the context of Cathays Park or respect the smaller scale of its Victorian neighbours.

This scheme will have a very negative impact on the eastern elevation of the most important collection of major listed buildings in Wales. The facing elevation along Park Place will appear too over-bearing, situated as it is so close to the pavement. It is a long narrow building containing facilities that already exist on the campus and for

this, the City is losing a fine Victorian villa and large garden, which enhance the sense of park campus in the middle of a Capital city. It is effectively damaging the essential setting of the original University building by W.D.Caroe, and the rest of Cathays Park, due to its scale and lack of relationship to these and neighbouring buildings. Also it is not clear how the loss of the avenue of trees at this point along Park Place will be mitigated.

The effect on the character of this part of the Cathays Park Conservation Area will be very significant. The neo classical idiom and use of materials that have been chosen for the design are at odds with the rest of Park Place, which are largely late Victorian Gothic revival or a diluted form of the same. This is not an accident of planning, but in fact reflects the later development of Cathays Park, which itself is evidence of the growing wealth and power of Cardiff and crucially of the push for 'home' institutions and the decades that it took for Cardiff to acquire the land from the Bute Estate, for these national institutions. In their turn, the Bute Estate prescribed the use of Portland Stone and the cornice height of the buildings, also the layout of the site and avenues of trees as a

condition of sale. This proposal therefore affects the clarity of the defined area of Cathays Park by 'spilling' across the boundary.

I think there should be greater public participation in this consultation. It is also a premature proposal given that the joint master planning commission has not yet reported on the enhancements for the area.

7.7 **Cardiff Civic Society**

Cardiff Civic Society objects to Cardiff University's Centre for Student Life building on a number of counts.

First of all it will result in the demolition of the historic Victorian villas of numbers 46, 47 and 48 Park Place – within the Conservation Area. Losing these buildings will damage the integrity of the area, and also result in a dangerous precedent – placing historic buildings in this, and other city conservation areas at risk.

The proposed building will also result in the loss of many trees in the avenue, a loss which cannot be mitigated.

Aesthetically, the proposed scheme jars with other buildings in its location, particularly as it is higher than neighbouring buildings, and fronts Park Place, rather than being set back from it.

Furthermore, the proposal is in breach of Cardiff Council's own commitment to protecting Cardiff's built heritage. Key Policy 17 says "Cardiff's distinctive heritage assets will be protected, managed and enhanced, in particular the character and setting of its Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings, Registered Historic Landscapes, Parks, Gardens, Conservation Areas, Locally Listed Buildings and other features of local interest that positively contribute to the distinctiveness of the city."

The Planning Inspector recently stressed the importance of maintaining the Victorian villas in Park Place, stressing in a recent judgement the importance of maintaining a 'coherent context' and 'harmonious street frontage' in Park Place.

A Centre for Student Life could be built that respects the city's heritage rather than damaging it, as this proposal does.

8. **ANALYSIS**

PRINCIPAL ISSUES

- 8.1 Conservation Area Consent is required for the total or substantial demolition of a building located within a Conservation Area.
- 8.2 The development proposes the removal of four unlisted Victorian buildings, (46, 46A, 47 and 48 Park Place; and a late 20th Century brick built staircase, from

the Cathays Park Conservation Area. A high stone wall forming the curtilage enclosure of one of the buildings (No 46 Park Place) is also proposed to be demolished.

THE BUILDINGS

46 Park Place

- 8.3 46 Park Place dates from Circa 1875 as part of the original development of Park Place, It is in Pennant Sandstone in an early French Gothic style (as influenced by William Burgess) with Bath stone dressings.
- 8.4 It is currently a relatively plain, two/three storey building without adornment It shows evidence of past adaptation and extension in terms of the absence of an entrance porch, rendering to the lower half of the northern elevation and accretion of rear extensions.
- 8.5 A Coach House (Now 46A) is positioned at the rear of the site.
- 8.6 The interior has been altered, with the loss of original fireplaces, windows and decorative features. However these features enjoy no protection and no form of permission would have been required to remove them.
- 8.7 Overall, this building is considered a quiet back cloth building retaining a number of characteristic external features common with other buildings on the domestic side of Park Place, but not a principal building or building of special note.

46A PARK PLACE

- 8.8 The building is again pennant stone fronted, it is two storey with originally twin cart entry, now converted to a single door access door and a landscape orientated window set in fixed screens. The northern side of the front elevation has a roof gable, which now contains a 6 pane window. This may have originally been a hoist access to first floor but this is conjecture.

THE WALL

- 8.9 The original garden wall to 46 Park Place is also in Pennant stone, survives and provides a boundary to the street. It is of substantial height (over 3 metres) and unusual in this regard, but again is not particularly architecturally significant, utilising a random arrangement of stretcher and jumpers with added levelling stones as opposed to a more formal sneck construction between northern and southern ends respectively.

47-48 PARK PLACE

- 8.10 47-48 Park Place were designed by the Bute-Estate architect Edwin Wortley Montague Corbett in 1890 as a symmetrical semi-detached pair of red brick houses. They therefore pre-date the current University Building, but have been

much altered in their lifetime so that their original form is only weakly discernible.

- 8.11 It is reported that the buildings were originally constructed with a line of symmetry on a central gable facing Park Place, the gable contained a two storey projecting bay dropping back to the main building façade which had a central single storey hipped bay before being finished with a two storey bay beneath a secondary gable which returned to the rear of the site and provided a porch entrance to north and south elevations.
- 8.12 By 1920, ordnance maps confirm that No. 48 had been much extended to the rear.
- 8.13 No. 47 was altered in 1935 with the addition of a substantial side extension which continued the red brick aesthetic and slate roof further south.
- 8.14 The frontage of No. 48 was substantially extended with a single storey extension in the 1980s; and further adaptations to both buildings were seen in 2010/11 when the ground floors of No 48 were converted to A3 use as Costa Coffee and Subway food outlets.

THE DUTIES PLACED ON THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY IN DETERMINING THIS APPLICATION FOR DEMOLITION.

- 8.15 Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 directs that :

“Every Local Planning Authority :

- (a) shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and
- (b) shall designate those areas as Conservation Areas.”

- 8.16 Thereafter S71 of the Act requires that it shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas. This is most often done in the form of policies within a development plan, or in documents such as Local Planning Authority ‘Conservation Area Appraisals’ or other plans or strategies.
- 8.17 Section 72 of the Act then places a duty on Local Planning Authorities, in the exercise of their powers under the Planning Acts, to pay ‘special attention’ to the desirability of ‘preserving or enhancing the character or appearance’ of a conservation area which it has designated.
- 8.18 Policy KP17 of the Local Development Plan [LDP], requires that Cardiff’s distinctive heritage assets will be protected, managed and enhanced, and makes particular reference to the character and setting of its Listed Buildings

and Conservation Areas as heritage assets which are also recognised as contributing to the distinctiveness of the city.

- 8.19 Detailed Policy EN9 provides that Development relating to any of the City's heritage assets (or which affects their setting) will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the development 'preserve's or 'enhances' the asset's architectural quality, historic and cultural significance, character, integrity and/or setting.
- 8.20 The Cathays Park Conservation Area Appraisal records the special qualities of the area and proposes enhancements which would be desirable to achieve when processing applications within the area.
- 8.21 It is noted that the loss of the buildings on the site is seen by those opposing the development as being contrary to policy KP17 but also that the design of the proposed building is seen as an undesirable change in the character and appearance of the Conservation Area contrary to Policy ENV9. In that the building will not preserve or enhance the character of the Victorian Domestic Aesthetic to the Western side of Park Place.
- 8.22 However it is also noted that the Designation of a Conservation area, more than any other protective designation, does allow for the potential for change, and that the emphasis of the designation is placed on the preservation of the character of the area, and not on building fabric per se.
- 8.23 The location of a building in a conservation area therefore does not provide for its preservation in perpetuity, but does provide for a general presumption in favour of keeping buildings which make a positive contribution to the character of the area.
- 8.24 To help local planning authorities in their consideration of such matters, Circular 61:96 provides for guidance of the issues to be considered when demolitions are proposed.

CRITERIA TO BE CONSIDERED

- 8.25 Section 33. of Welsh Office Circular 61:96 indicates that there should be a general presumption in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area; and that proposals to demolish such buildings should be assessed against the same broad criteria as proposals to demolish listed buildings.
- 8.26 The broad criteria relevant to the consideration of all listed building consent applications to modify, extend or demolish listed buildings relate to consideration of the importance of the building, its intrinsic architectural and historic interest and rarity; the particular physical features of the building; its setting, and its contribution to the local scene; and the extent to which any proposals would bring substantial benefits for the community, in particular by

contributing to the economic regeneration of the area or the enhancement of the environment.

- 8.27 Circular 61:96 (Section 91) suggests that proposals to demolish unlisted buildings which make a positive contribution to the character of a conservation area should take the following into account
- (i) the condition of the building, the cost of repairing and maintaining it in relation to its importance and to the value derived from its continued use.
 - (ii) the adequacy of efforts made to retain the building in use. (Including the offer of the unrestricted freehold of the building on the open market at a price reflecting the building's condition. *(normally relevant in instances where buildings are in poor condition or poorly maintained)*).
 - (iii) the merits of alternative proposals for the site.
- 8.28 The developer's heritage consultant suggests that the buildings, as existing, make only a modest positive contribution to the character of the domestic buildings along Park Place, but make a negligible contribution to the conservation area in relation to the Civic Centre group, which the consultants consider the principal reason for the designation. It is also suggested that the buildings have little prospect of ever being restored to their original appearance and character and that the frontage of 48 Park Place especially, actually detracts from the setting of the listed Main Building and from the approach to the City Centre.
- 8.29 From inspection of the properties, the Heritage advisor's comments cannot be disagreed with in respect of the current presentation of the buildings. Of course any building can be reverted to its original form given sufficient funds or inclination, but that properly raises questions relating to how genuine a building it is, if substantially reconstructed, or even replaced in entirety with a facsimile building, and the merit of doing so.
- 8.30 This said, the presentation of the facades of 47 and 48 are considered to remain characteristic of red brick Victorian architecture of the period, and reasonably capable of being preserved as such, given that the relatively modern single storey extension to 48 could be removed and the building made good; nor is the frontage of 46 Park Place considered to detract from the experience of the conservation area; and the wall enclosing the curtilage of that building does have a worn and familiar character reflective of the age of the majority of buildings on the western side of the road.
- 8.31 Overall however the conclusions of the Heritage consultants are agreed with in respect that the buildings have seen significant adaptation, and if a development of sufficient quality were proposed in their place, that they can no longer be said to make such a positive contribution to the character of the area, that their demolition cannot be ruled out.
- 8.32 Planning Committee should also be aware that this would appear to have been the conclusion reached in respect of the proposed demolition of the buildings in

1999, when Conservation Area Consent for their removal was previously granted.

- 8.33 Opponents of the demolitions, and the new building, would no doubt suggest that this should be viewed in the context of the previously approved development on the site, which although evidently considered satisfactory at the time, may, like the student union building, may not be viewed in the same manner if considered today.
- 8.34 As such, given that the duty placed on the Local Planning Authority is to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the character and appearance of the area, (as opposed to the preservation of building fabric, as is the case with a Listed Building), the potential for the existing buildings to be demolished should properly account for the merit of the replacement building and for the potential of its design to retain a currency in the future.

THE MERIT OF THE PROPOSED NEW BUILDING

Context

- 8.35 The design concept and building detail is described at length in the submitted design and access statement but can be summarised as a proposal to extend the geographical confines of the area of grand individual set pieces of Civic Architecture, on the western side of Park Place to the eastern side and to continue their aesthetic of principally pale coloured stone and concrete, in an area previously characterised by more domestically scaled brick and stone buildings..
- 8.36 The proposed building does not attempt to mimic or replicate any of the existing buildings in the immediate area in terms of layout scale or massing. Rather taking a classical idiom and interpreting it to take the best elements of modern technology and construction to provide a wholly unique building blending both the classical and the modern.
- 8.37 The site as amassed is unique in its linearity, and the proposed building exploits that to its advantage. The proposed building will unashamedly be far longer and taller than any of the other buildings in the immediate vicinity. There are no other buildings in the immediate area which have such a long unbroken frontage or which would have the continuous height proposed by the CSL.
- 8.38 As such the building is presented as an architectural entity in its own right. The building would be some 140m long and would present a frontage of approximately 127m to Park Place in the form of a continuous colonnade of slimline columns tracing the slow arc of the existing highway. The building would be some 21.6m high from footway to roofline, (and would include for a further 6m of roof structures set back toward the railway line/student union boundary, but these for the greater part, would not be seen from the conservation area.

- 8.39 Visually the height of the building would be broken with a terrace line at its second floor level at a height of approximately 13.5m which would correspond to some 4/7 th of its height as a classical proportion which would be provided as a glass balustrade enclosure forward of a visually slimline floor construction. This also allows for a visual change in the column presentation of the upper floors of the building if necessary.
- 8.40 In context the building would screen the current Student Union building which has a roof height of some 19m, and appear above the nearest adjacent buildings being the University Gymnasium to the North, and the 45 Park Place to the South, both having roof heights of approximately 13.5m tall, but would be separated from those buildings by a generous distance of approximately 12m to give emphasis to its presence as one of the most important elements of the new University 'Campus'.
- 8.41 The roof line of the Main University building is approximated at some 15.00m tall at a distance of around 20m at its closest point. However the principal elevation of the main building is some 90 metres distant, and considered to offset any potential competition between the two structures. Whilst the pale coloured nature of the materials used in their construction unites them.
- 8.42 It is undoubtedly the Architect's intent that the building is designed to have a commanding presence in the street scene and through modern construction, to reflect the finish of the Portland Stone used on the classical architecture opposite, in respect of the choice of a sympathetic white concrete aesthetic.
- 8.43 This is evidently a change to the characteristic use of dressed brick, stone and render currently existing to the eastern side of the road, but is not a discordant material within the area generally.

Scale and Massing

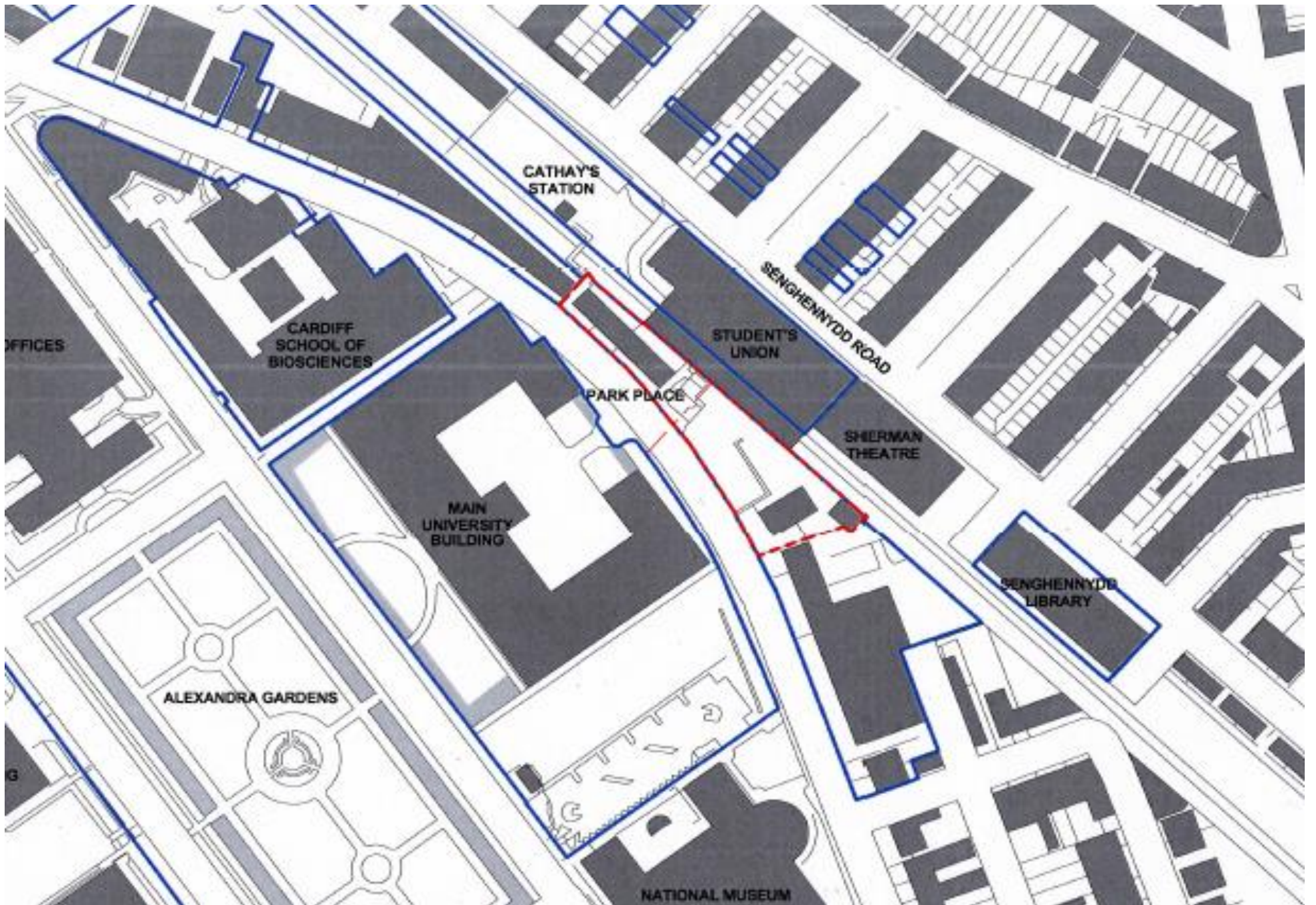
- 8.44 The building is therefore much taller than its immediately adjacent neighbours (some 8m between roof lines in respect of the Villas, and Gym with addition height of roof structures from longer views) but would be set apart from those buildings by a reasonable separation to ensure for space about the building and to mitigate against any overbearing juxtaposition. It is noted that against the backcloth of the University towers to the Junction of Colum Road and Park Place, that even at 5 storey height it would by no means be the tallest building in the conservation area.
- 8.45 Positively, the scale of the building would ensure that it would obscure the current student union building, and would remove its current staircase to Park Place which is considered to improve the current street scene.
- 8.46 The linear frontage of the building is also proposed to be a design strength, allowing for the manifestation of a colonnade which will gently curve to follow the boundary of the site with the adjoining footway, behind which the presentation of the building is broken into three principal sections of glass curtain walling to the south, masonry staircase to the central mid-section of the

building (corresponding with the entrance position of the driveway to University Main building); and further panelled and glazed concession offers to the north.

- 8.47 Amended plans indicate that the length of the building has been modestly reduced to accommodate a more generous approach to the Cathays railway station and to facilitate a rear service access with less potential for conflict between service vehicles, pedestrians (whether students or rail users), and car and delivery vehicles accessing the rear of properties on Park Place. This is considered beneficial in respect of increasing the distance between the new building which is higher than the adjacent University Gym and thereby lessening the visual disparity between them, whilst allowing airspace about the new building which allows it to settle more comfortably within the available plot. To the south, the ground floor double height curtain glazed presentation of the building is set well back in an attempt to reconcile the building line of 45 Park Place, which is a three storey building. This is welcomed and will reduce the visual impact of the return of the building as appreciated from street level.

9. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 9.1 It is concluded therefore that this is one of a very rare number of instances where the character and appearance of the wider conservation area is better preserved, and enhanced, by the replacement of the three Victorian buildings with an appropriate and sensitive contemporary architectural structure.
- 9.2 The removal of the Victorian buildings for the purposes of the construction of the Centre for Student will both Preserve and Enhance the Character and Appearance of the Cathays Park Conservation Area, whilst securing significant public and economic benefit for the city, and that it is therefore appropriate to Grant Conservation Area Consent for their demolition.





Student Union

46 Park Place

48/47 Park Place

Plasy Parc Plasy Parc

Park Pl

Google

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