

## 195-197 City Road: Questions and Answers

**Q. Who are Bonne Mares Ltd?**

A. Bonne Mares is a small property company that owns the site.

**Q. Does Bonne Mares own this site?**

A. Yes. It acquired the site in 2007. Before this, the site had been empty for a number of years following the closure of a variety of uses after a cinema was no longer viable, including a bingo hall and bowling alley. The last use of the site, a bowling alley, closed in 2006.

**Q. Why does the building have to be demolished?**

A. Over time, the building was used as a cinema, bingo hall and bowling alley but finally closed down permanently in 2006. Despite efforts to attract alternative viable uses it has failed to attract new tenants. The building, which has been derelict for over 10 years, has been targeted by squatters and vandalism and is structurally unsafe. Cardiff City Council has granted permission for demolition of the building last year, to enable the site to be brought back into use.

**Q. Where is the site?**

A. The former Gaiety Cinema is 195-197 City Road, within the Roath area of Cardiff, to the north east of Cardiff City Centre.

**Q. What are the proposals for?**

A. The outline planning application is for a new purpose-built student accommodation building, with commercial units on the ground floor.

The building is stepped up to eight storeys and includes:

- Up to 134 en-suite bedrooms arranged in 22 cluster flats: a mix of 5,6 and 7 bedrooms arranged around hubs containing shared facilities.
- Cycle parking for 148 bicycles
- Refuse storage
- Plant room
- Communal courtyard
- Student foyer
- 214sqm ground floor commercial space accessed off City Road

Improvements are also proposed to Northcote Street Lane, with two access points for deliveries and pick-up/drop-off zones for students at the start and end of term.

**Q. What will go in the ground floor commercial units?**

A. It is hoped that the commercial space will bring new amenities that will benefit the local community as well as the students living here. However, as this is an outline application, we are applying for permission for general commercial space on the ground floor at this stage. Subject to outline consent being granted, appropriate tenants will be sought. Further information will be included at the next stage of the planning process, in the detailed (reserved matters) application.

**Q. Who would manage the student accommodation?**

A. Bonne Mares is looking at a number of options, which would see the accommodation managed by a specialist student accommodation provider.

**Q. What will the building look like?**

A. We are looking at using materials that would complement the surrounding neighbourhood, such as brick and cladding. However, this will be determined at the detailed design phase; which would be consulted on before submitting a reserved matters application.

**Q. Will my garden/rooms facing the proposed development be overlooked?**

A. The windows would be angled to obscure views from the student accommodation, maintaining the privacy of neighbours.

**Q. Will the proposed development block out light to my house?**

A. The building has been designed to meet the Council's design guidance and is sufficiently distanced from houses on Richmond Road to maintain privacy and would not restrict light to neighbouring houses.

**Q. There's already a lot of purpose-built student accommodation in Cardiff – do we need more?**

A. Although it may seem that a large number of purpose-built student accommodation has come forward for planning over recent years, Cardiff is home to three universities: Cardiff University, Cardiff Metropolitan and the University of South Wales (USW). These universities have a combined total of more than 40,000 students and there is a shortfall in the number of beds needed to house students.

In addition to demand for student accommodation exceeding supply, many of the recent schemes contain studios, which can be more expensive to rent. Our project focuses on much-needed cluster flats, which are popular with students, more affordable and create a supportive environment, contributing to student welfare.

Cardiff is ranked as one of the best locations in the UK for university study and students are seeking increased levels of quality and value for money from their university experience. In addition, Cardiff University continues to increase its profile (currently ranked 32<sup>nd</sup> in the Times Good University Guide), with a significant amount of applications (5.6 for each university place). Therefore, projections indicate the number of students in the City will continue to increase.

In addition, Cardiff Council is striving to reduce the number of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) across central locations such as Roath and Plasnewydd, which can often be low quality and badly managed, and reduces the number of family homes available across the City. The student accommodation proposed provides suitable alternative accommodation in a highly accessible location.

**Q. There are already other student halls in close proximity (either operational or under construction), including City Heights on City Road. Are more needed here?**

A. City Road is ideally located for students due to its close proximity to the shops and amenities in the local area as well as the City centre and a number of key University campus sites, such as the Cardiff University Engineering Block and the University of South Wales.

**Q. How will the site be accessed?**

We are proposing to make improvements to Northcote Street Lane, to widen the lane and create two access points to the development for deliveries to the commercial units and for students to be dropped-off and picked-up at the start and end of term.

Students will be able to access the building from Northcote Street Lane - which is where the secure cycle parking will be located. Students will also be able to access the main foyer from City Road.

**Q. Will there be car parking spaces for the students?**

A. There are no car parking spaces included in the proposed scheme. However, we are providing up to 148 cycle parking spaces. Due to its central location, we would expect residential students to use the excellent public transport links, cycle or walk.

**Q. How will waste and recycling be managed?**

A. A communal waste and recycling storage area will be provided as part of the proposals. This will allow waste from the student development to be collected as part of Cardiff Council's waste collection service and help prevent the problems of rubbish that are often associated with HMOs.

**Q. How sustainable will the proposed building be?**

A. The aim is to provide a desirable and sustainable place to live. This includes delivering a building which meets modern building standards regarding sustainability, including using appropriate materials, which will be determined at the reserved matters stage, and the building's future operation, by providing appropriate recycling storage etc.

**Q. How will the new development benefit the local community?**

A. As well as jobs created by the proposed commercial/retail space, there will be opportunities during the construction period and when the accommodation is operational, which could include reception, hospitality and other related jobs and supply chain opportunities.

**Q. How can I find out more about the application?**

A. The full draft application can be viewed at [www.wyg.com/planning/consultations/city-road-cardiff](http://www.wyg.com/planning/consultations/city-road-cardiff)

**Q. When are you submitting the application?**

A. The submission of the application will follow the public consultation in the coming months, once all comments have been received and addressed where appropriate.

**Q. How do I make my views known?**

A. You can email your feedback to [planning.cardiff@wyg.com](mailto:planning.cardiff@wyg.com) or write to: FREEPOST GRASSHOPPER CONSULT (no further address or stamp required)

The deadline for responses is 9 March 2019.

**Q. How are you consulting local people on your plans?**

A. Bonne Mares is undertaking a statutory consultation process from 6 February to 9 March 2019. Letters and notices were sent to stakeholders, neighbouring residents and local businesses and notices placed around the site to inform the local community about the consultation and invite feedback on the plans.