



DESIGN
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Design Review Report

Churchlands, Residential,
North East Cardiff
Meeting of 22nd May 2014



Declarations of Interest

Panel members, observers and other relevant parties are required to declare ***in advance*** any interests they may have in relation to the Design Review Agenda items. Any such declarations are recorded here and in DCFW's central records.

Review Status

PUBLIC

Meeting date	22 nd May 2014
Issue date	11 th June 2014
Scheme location	North East Cardiff
Scheme description	Residential/Masterplan
Scheme reference number	37
Planning status	Outline/hybrid application submitted

Declarations of Interest

None declared.

Consultations to Date

This scheme was previously reviewed by the Design Commission on 20th February 2014. This report should be read in conjunction with the report from the earlier review.

Extensive pre-application consultation with the Local Authority took place at an earlier stage. However, continuity of communication was interrupted and has only recently resumed. Meetings with Lisvane Community Council were held on 28th November 2013 and 4th February 2014.

The Proposals

This site forms part of the proposed North East Cardiff Strategic Site in the deposit Cardiff LDP allocated for 4,500 new homes.

A hybrid planning application - outline for 1,200 homes, with full for highways and drainage infrastructure - was submitted in September 2013. The Commission understands that the deadline for determination has been extended.

The 47.4 hectare site predominantly comprises fields separated by hedgerows, with areas of mature trees to the north. Three roads currently cross the site, with Corpus Christi High School to the south.

The site forms part of a wider masterplan which includes further housing, mixed-use and schools, as well as a public transport network.

Summary

- The Design Commission for Wales acknowledges tangible frustration with the recent interruption in communication with the LPA regarding schools provision and masterplanning principles, which have an impact on the project. b The layout of routes, especially to the areas off the main spine road, still requires more work to improve connectivity throughout the scheme. Although the planning application is less concerned with the design of the minor routes, presentation of further design work would help to demonstrate the links and justify the overall layout
- Replanning the neighbourhood centre to bring it closer to the water course is sensible and offers the opportunity to use the stream to add value and character to the development, particularly in the initial development phases. The relationships between public realm, buildings and watercourse must be well designed to achieve this
- The density of development should be adjusted to reflect the replanning of the neighbourhood centre. This change would establish new desire lines and inform the layout of routes and blocks
- The Commission remains concerned about the 6.1m width of the main spine road, particularly if increased demands are placed on it following replanning of the centre.
- The Commission recommends that the team works with an architect to produce a scheme which can be presented to the Local Authority, which clearly and convincingly demonstrates the character and function of the routes, and the character and function of the various places which will exist along them.
- A 3D model would help to demonstrate the topography and massing.

Main Points in Detail

Coordination with Local Authority

The Commission acknowledged the tangible sense of frustration and urges all parties and the LPA to communicate in a timely and constructive manner to enable the delivery of good quality development on this major site in Cardiff. Developer engagement through DCFW's design review service is positive and we welcome their stated ambition to add value through design. Positive dialogue between the developer/design team and the LPA on both strategic and implementation matters, including design principles and the potential use of Design Coding is now required.

Public Realm and Routes

It is not yet clearly demonstrated how the proposed first phase of development will connect into future adjacent residential development. The residential routes off the main spine road shown on the current drawings are not detailed and appear to be mostly cul-de-sacs. The Commission considers there is scope to improve the connectivity through these minor routes, and suggests the access connections along the spine road should

reflect a more permeable strategy. More detailed design of these might also assist further discussion with the Local Authority and demonstrate how good permeability can be achieved.

The Commission still has concerns about the capacity of the 6.1m wide main route through the scheme, and whether it could cope with buses, other traffic and access and servicing of the properties along it. It is acknowledged that the design, including consideration of width, should seek to limit speed of traffic. The Panel believes that the design of the public realm, its role and interconnections, as well as the proposed types and density of dwellings are important in making this route work effectively. This now needs to be considered in more detail alongside discussions with the planning and highways authorities. We would like to see the route design reflect changes in use, now under active consideration, and specifically the drop off and parking space near to the schools and any community facilities.

Any trees proposed alongside roads must take into account the required vision splays from adjoining roads and driveways, and any other Highways restrictions; a matter ideally covered in a Design Code.

Neighbourhood Centre

Making the neighbourhood centre more linear and extending it to the water course seems rational and offers opportunities for the stream to add character and value to the public realm, as well as better connection with Maerdy Green. Although the team cannot control what happens on the eastern side of the stream, the proposals should indicate practical options for what might be delivered on that side.

The provision and distribution of green space is an important element of this proposal, and if the neighbourhood centre is replanned, sufficient green open space should still be provided while allowing diversity in its character along the line of the stream.

The nature, number and alignment of roads, paths and bus routes may also need to be adapted to suit the proposed arrangement of the centre, and to match desire lines. Proper design of the routes should not be constrained by the existing planning application. The distribution of densities may also need to be altered.

The topography around the stream and any risk of flooding will have to be taken into account in the layout and design of the buildings and landscape. This would suggest a managed water environment and it is recommended that the team appoint a landscape architect to develop the potential of this strategy at this stage. The design team should consider whether 'rain gardens' would be appropriate in this location to manage water drainage through an integrated landscape design. Welsh Water's Llanelli Rainscape project and proposed Greener Grangetown are useful examples.

The team should draw design principles from international precedent projects which have successfully integrated residential/community development with an existing water course.

The viability of any proposed quantity of mixed-use in this masterplan should be tested. The scheme must be deliverable in both planning and physical terms. Discussions with Housing Associations and community groups are a positive step.

The Local Authority should be clear about which elements of the overall masterplan it will take control of and set criteria for, in order to ensure its delivery in future phases. In this first phase of the scheme, the treatment of the stream, road and public realm are important considerations. The Commission recommends that the team engages the Local Authority with an integrated design for the neighbourhood hub in order to progress discussions.

Density and Character

The character of the proposed development and how it might change along the length of the main road are uncertain from the drawings. The team would benefit from a considered pause, reassessing the key aspects of the proposals, and setting out a revised design-led strategy for delivery of the project aims.

Variations in the density of housing, (whilst taking note of the draft Local Development Plan), and a holistic approach to the design of highways and public spaces will help establish the design character. The detail of the houses could be simple in appearance if a 'Garden Village' character is desired, with greater design emphasis placed on the spaces between the houses and roads.

Further Work and Engagement

A three-dimensional model would help to explain and explore design ideas, form, density and constraints, and the relationship of built environment to the existing topography and watercourse.

The Design Commission would welcome the opportunity to review any further information and continue to use our expertise to add value and assist all parties with the delivery of a good quality scheme for this site and the kind of place and neighbourhood it can become.

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A Welsh language copy of this report is available upon request.

Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer:	Jane Carpenter, Redrow
Architectural/Urban Designer:	Ed Turner, Pegasus (urban design) Lyn Powell, RPS (planning) Ian Southall, Vectos (transport)
Local Authority:	
Design Review Panel:	
Chair	Alan Francis
Lead Panellist	Roger Ayton Michael Griffiths Amanda Spence, Design Advisor, DCFW Carole-Anne Davies, Chief Executive
Observing:	Jamie Brewster