

# Design Review Report

Swansea Central (St David's),  
Swansea

**DCFW Ref: N119**

Meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> January 2017



## Declarations of Interest

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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

Meeting date

Issue date

Scheme location

Scheme description

Scheme reference number

Planning status

### CONFIDENTIAL

19<sup>th</sup> January 2017

1<sup>st</sup> February 2017

Swansea

Mixed Use

N119

Pre-application

## Declarations of Interest

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None declared.

## Consultations to Date

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DCFW was consulted during the development of the Swansea City Centre Strategic Framework. Proposals for this site were reviewed by the Commission in October 2016

Public and stakeholder consultation has been undertaken by the local authority.

## The Proposals

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Redevelopment of the former St David's site and land to the south of Oystermouth Road. The proposed development includes a mix of new retail, cinema, restaurants, arena and hotel with residential accommodation on upper storeys and accompanying public realm works. The exact mix and quantum of development has been refined since the previous review but is yet to be finally determined.

## Main Points in Detail

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The Design Commission welcomed the return of this scheme to design review and the opportunity to comment on the updated proposals. It was clear that a considerable amount of work had been undertaken since the previous review providing more clarity and certainty regarding various aspects of the proposals and addressing some of the concerns raised in the previous design review. The proposals show significant ambition for this site. Some elements regarding future uses and occupiers are still unknown so the need for flexibility in the proposals was acknowledged.

This report should be read in conjunction with the report from the previous review. It will not repeat the points raised previously, rather it focuses on the main points that

emerged from this review, which should be considered in the development of the outline planning application stage.

### **Key action points**

- Refine the vision so that the function, nature and feel of the development is encapsulated within a succinct paragraph and/or diagram. The proposed development will have a significant impact on the identity of Swansea and further clarity is needed as to what will make it distinctive beyond the material selection. The vision should also reflect the desired quality which is of fundamental importance for this part of the city centre. To achieve the desired quality and identity within a realistic budget, it may be necessary to identify the locations/elevations/corners where investment should be focused, and secondary or tertiary elevations where a simpler, more cost effective approach may be appropriate. Overall the appearance of the buildings and the public realm must work in harmony to establish a unified and coherent identity.
- Develop the concept, ideas and programme behind the public realm strategy in further detail alongside the urban design framework and design code for the buildings. The proposed 'green artery' is currently unconvincing and should either be strengthened or an alternative strategy justified. This may include consideration of a primary route that is more urban with clear sight lines, and a secondary route that is greener and more meandering. There is the potential for over-complication if too many concepts are incorporated, so refinement of the ideas may be required.
- Provide further details and reduce uncertainty regarding the north-south connection and the issues around access between different levels. There must be no doubt that movement between key locations is accessible to all and the number of barriers to movement are minimised. This could be presented as a series of diagrams.
- Further development of the phasing plans to test different scenarios based on which elements of the scheme may come first and what temporary measures may be needed to achieve the overall vision. This is particularly relevant if the arena is developed during the initial phases as the levels and links across Oystermouth Road will need to be in place. Quick wins and temporary uses would help to maintain momentum and start to change perceptions of the area.
- Much more detail is required on the sustainability and energy strategies for the overall development. This aspiration has been embodied in the City Centre Strategic Framework, but needs to be articulated in a more convincing and ambitious manner. This has a long term impact for the management and maintenance of the development and must be considered at this stage so that it be fully integrated into the proposals.

### **Additional points for consideration**

- The document would benefit from further reference to the City Centre Strategic Framework to provide the context for the development and show how the aims of the framework are being satisfied or enhanced.

- Concerns regarding the impact of the proposed bridge on the quality of the environment of Oystermouth Road remain, but it is accepted that this approach will be pursued. The management and maintenance implications of this dominant piece of public realm infrastructure including all of the steps, hard and soft landscaping need to be understood and factored into future cost plans to ensure that the quality of the public realm can be maintained.
- Natural surveillance of the bridge should be a key consideration as proposals are developed for the bridge itself and the uses on either side. A plan showing activity at different times of the day may help to determine whether there will be sufficient surveillance and activity on the bridge to ensure that it feels like a safe environment.
- Maintaining public engagement through the process will be important and how feedback is collected and used should be considered. It is positive to see the previous consultation interpreted and illustrated but future feedback may be more qualitative rather than quantitative and creative approaches may be required to capture this input. The initial steps regarding engagement are encouraging and the direction of travel is supported.

### **Further review**

This was the last opportunity to review the scheme before the submission of an outline planning application which is due in March. We would welcome the opportunity to review elements of the development as they come forward at the reserved matters stage.

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

## Attendees

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Architects: Friedrich Ludewig, ACME  
Marina Kindelan, ACME  
Anna Czigler, ACME

Landscape Architect:	Sharon Chan, Capita
Development Advisor:	David Lewis, Rivington Land
Planning Consultant:	Chris Potts, Savills
Local Authority:	Lee Richards David Owen Katy Evans Steve Smith
Design Review Panel:	
Chair	Simon Richards
Lead Panellist	Michael Gwyther-Jones
Panel	Cora Kwiatkowski Chris Jones Jen Heal, Design Advisor, DCFW Amanda Spence, Design Advisor, DCFW
Observing:	Andrew Richards, Arts Council Wales Jane Colhoun, Arts Council Wales