

Design Review Report

Wren's Nest, South Sebastopol

DCFW Ref: N134

Meeting of 16th February 2017



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

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| Meeting date | CONFIDENTIAL 16 th February 2017 |
| Issue date | 6 th March 2017 |
| Scheme location | South Sebastopol, Torfaen |
| Scheme description | Residential |
| Scheme reference number | N134 |
| Planning status | Outline permission granted |

Declarations of Interest

None

Consultations to Date

Consultation on this stage of work for this phase (Development Brief) has not yet taken place.

The Proposals

The site is the 3rd phase of a larger urban infill/town expansion scheme that will eventually join Sebastopol to Cwmbran/Pontnewydd. This review is concerned with the southern section known as Wren's Nest. To the south the land abuts Pontnewydd, the eastern edge is the A4051 (Cwmbran Drive). To the north the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal establishes a very strong edge as does the deep, wooded valley to the east. Within the site there are a number of established woodland copses and hedgerows.

The brief seeks to provide up to 370 dwellings ranging from one-bedroom to five-bedroom houses on the 24.2 hectares of undulating greenfield land currently used for agricultural purposes. Dwellings will generally be the developer's 'standard house' types other than some L-shaped units to turn corners. It is stated that the design is a landscape led masterplan.

The scheme for the wider area and this site, have been before the DCFW Design review on 3 previous occasions, the last being 18th February 2016. This report should be read in conjunction with previous reports.

Main Points in Detail

The following points summarise key issues from the review, and should be considered to inform further work:

Informative Analysis

The site analysis and documentation of opportunities and constraints is good and presented clearly.

Existing and proposed cross sections through the site and immediate context, especially through the canal, would be useful in show how the design is responding to topography and site features.

Vision Statements & Character

Vision statements (illustrated) are a useful way to set out what places should actually be like. They will help define the different character areas for the Local Authority and the developer.

Lessons may be drawn from the layout of existing local, 'vernacular' settlements to give character using standard house types.

There is work to be done to reconcile the desired 'contemporary vernacular narrative' and the developer's standard house types. A solution may be to identify important views to facades/dwellings, and invest in these.

Realistic Detailed Design

The Development Brief needs to be realistic (rather than aspirational) and detailed enough to define firm delivery commitments for quality and character, including the four character areas identified by the team. It should cover the following issues:

- House types, orientation and density
- Grain of development
- Details of landscape design
- Street hierarchy and how this will be achieved – materials, dimensions, relationship to buildings, landscape design. Different road widths and differentiation of positioning of buildings along streets will help to achieve this.
- Illustrative street elevations
- Environmental performance targets
- Details of Village Green – how it will be a destination with sense of arrival. A 'crown' type green would make it more visible when viewed from surrounding streets by hiding the street surfaces behind
- Relationship between the canal, public realm, dwellings and private gardens
- Parking solutions
- Management plan for open spaces
- Public transport routes and stops
- Walking and cycling routes
- Servicing (refuse collection etc.) – the need for turning heads should be avoided. Service vehicles can use one-way routes which vary in width to maintain a hierarchy of streets.

Environmental Performance & Sustainability

The environmental performance of dwellings and sustainability aspirations of the development as a whole should be a core issue of the Development Brief. A strategy should be developed at this stage which includes consideration of orientation of buildings/streets.

Design for Inclusion and Well-being

Considering 'a-day-in-the-life' scenarios for different residents who will live in the development and their visitors will help the team to design for inclusivity and maximise opportunities for Active Travel.

Good inclusive design will allow for all types of people to live in the community throughout their lifetimes. Consultation with access and disability groups and the visually impaired can positively inform the design. Shared surfaces need to be given detailed consideration to ensure that they are suitable and safe for all users.

Walking and cycle routes for everyday journeys outside of the development area need to be planned for, as well as the network of proposed routes inside the wider site.

A further review meeting would be valuable and should be planned for soon.

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

Attendees

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| Agent/Client/Developer: | Richard Price, Taylor Wimpey |
| Architect/Planning Consultant: | Jamie Donegan & Gareth Howell, The Urbanists Robin Williams, Asbri Planning Jon Wilks, WPM Planning and Development |
| Local Authority: | Helen Smith & Richard Lewis, Torfaen CBC |
| Design Review Panel: | |

Chair
Lead Panellist

Ewan Jones
Kedrick Davies
Maria Asenjo
Jamie Brewster
Michael Griffiths
Amanda Spence, Design Advisor, DCFW
Carole-Anne Davies, CE, DCFW