

Design Review Report

Penyffordd CP School,
Flintshire

DCFW Ref: N149

Meeting of 13th July 2017



Review Status

Meeting date
Issue date
Scheme location
Scheme description
Scheme reference number
Planning status

PUBLIC

13th July 2017
26th July 2017
Flintshire
Primary School
N149
Pre-application

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.

None declared.

Consultations to Date

Formal pre-application consultation with the Local Planning Authority is due to commence later in July 2017 along with statutory public consultation. This is the first review of this project with DCFW.

The Proposals

The site is occupied by the existing infant school and its playing field in the Southern part of Penyffordd, about nine miles from Chester. The proposed development consists of a 1.5 form entry primary school to be built on the available part of the existing infant school site whilst the school continues to operate – the available area suggests a two-storey school. The playing field to the East is proposed to be retained. The school massing is articulated into different elements and design development indicates evolution from pitched roof forms to flat roof box forms, and the proposal states that it responds to BB99 (Building Bulletin 99). Hall, studio and games pitch are intended for dual-use with the community.

Main Points

The Design Commission welcomed the opportunity to be consulted on this locally very significant development. Earlier consultation at the concept stage would have been beneficial to explore the design approach and allow more time for the feedback from the panel to be taken into consideration before a planning application is submitted.

Clarity of Concept

Through the process of design development and internal review it seems that the clarity that was evident in the concept diagram has been lost in the plan that is now presented. The strong idea of the student street has been diluted by clutter, lack of route legibility and narrow corridor widths.

The main entrance to the north seems compromised by various smaller rooms including the interview room and disabled toilet and the clarity of circulation is therefore reduced. This space should be welcoming with defined space for display and information and a clear access route to the upstairs via a lift or staircase.

The voids over the ground floor circulation space help to bring in natural light. However, the corridor is just 1.8m wide, with right angle bends and risks becoming cluttered with adjacent shared learning spaces. Simplification of the plan in some areas may help to restore some of the aspirations and clarity for this space and result in some cost savings that could be reinvested elsewhere.

Further exploration of the quality of the internal spaces in general is required. There is no specific vision for what these spaces will feel like or how the proportions, amount of daylight, views or proposed materials will help to achieve this and be beneficial for the school population.

Materials

Further analysis and justification for the choice of materials is required. The choice of bright coloured powder coated steel risks fading, becoming unfashionable over time and being vulnerable to chips and scrapes at ground floor level. A more considered approach to what the pupils will find welcoming, stimulating and robust along with further analysis of the local vernacular will help with this. It may be more appropriate and robust to land the building with natural materials. Material and colour selection should have relevance and be based upon an in depth approach to contextual analysis. Whilst the building does not necessarily need to be 'in keeping' with the immediate surroundings, it should respond in some way to its location. The exploration of the use of local materials is positive and should form part of the decision making process. The number of materials should also be controlled, especially if additional materials for screening etc are introduced.

Scale

The scale of the building has evolved as the design has developed and the eaves height was increased when the gables were lost. Whilst this has reduced the overall height of the building it makes the building appear taller from certain viewpoints. This, combined with the simple form and choice of materials presents a fairly imposing structure that may be intimidating to some children. Further section studies of the building in relation to its context are needed to explore the scale and consideration should be given to the perceived scale at a distance but also up close from the perspective of a child.

Sustainability Strategy

A sustainability strategy is needed to ensure that considerations are integrated into the form and orientation of the building. Current concerns are the long east-west elevations, window orientations, and lack of night cooling strategies, and natural shading. There is a teaching and learning opportunity if the building is inherently sustainable and this can be demonstrated to pupils. Time should be allowed for revisions following the environmental testing and modelling.

Part of the sustainability strategy must relate to promoting walking and cycling and there should be links with the local active travel plan. Access to the site on foot from different

directions must be accommodated to ensure that pedestrians are safe and feel comfortable. Currently there is an emphasis on access from the north-west but the north-east access is car-dominated. The two access points to the school also need to be clear. The number of parking spaces seems like an over provision for staff and visitors and we would recommend a review of this and how the drop-off point will be managed.

Landscape

It is positive that the front of the building is being used as part of the secure boundary and the arrangement of access to the different elements on site appears to be well thought through. The school should feel secure but not fortified and using the building helps to reduce the amount of fencing required. Further consideration should be given to how the space with the retained trees in front of the entrance might be used more positively and possibly included within the secure boundary to provide more natural play space for the children. Whether it is inside or outside of the fence it needs a landscape approach to ensure that it is a positive addition to the site. Any opportunities to reduce the amount of hard surfacing should be taken.

Next Steps

This development presents a fantastic opportunity for the school and the village and ambitions should be set high for the quality and contribution that this facility can make to education and village life, not least given the public investment and the importance of learning environments. It may be useful to look at what has been successfully achieved in terms of pupil experience, sustainability and community contribution in other 21st Century schools, some of which can be found in the case studies on the DCFW website.

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

Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer:	Andrew Garner, Wynne Construction Ian Edwards, Flintshire CC Dan McVey, Flintshire CC
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Architect/Planning Consultant: Peter Fisk, Lovelock Mitchell Architects
Rachel Fenton, Ryder Landscape Consultants

Local Planning Authority: Glyn Jones, Flintshire CC

Design Review Panel:
Chair Jamie Brewster
Lead Panellist Lynne Sullivan
Angela Williams
Toby Adam
Steve Smith
Jen Heal, Design Advisor, DCFW
Amanda Spence, Design Advisor, DCFW
Carole-Anne Davies, CE, DCFW

Observers Matt Thomas, Krystyna Williams, Rhys Rigby, Chris Jefford