

# Design Review Report

Hafod-Morfa Copperworks,  
Swansea

**DCFW Ref: N155**

Meeting of 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017



**Review Status**

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

**PUBLIC**

7<sup>th</sup> December 2017  
18th December 2017  
Swansea  
Distillery and visitor centre  
N155  
Pre-application

## 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.

None declared.

## Consultations to Date

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This is the first review of proposals for this site by the Design Commission for Wales.

## The Proposals

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The proposals comprise the conversion of the existing dilapidated listed 'Power House' into a working distillery and new build visitor centre, with a canopy connected to the adjacent Rolling Mill which will house maturing barrels.

## Main Points

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DCFW is supportive of the aspiration to deliver a high quality distillery and visitor attraction on this key heritage site in Swansea and welcomes the contemporary approach.

The following points summarise key issues arising from the review and should be considered to inform any further work ahead of a planning application being submitted:

**Arrival**

Legibility for visitors is key to the success of this scheme, however, the proposed access point is as yet unresolved. There is too little clarity in wayfinding for visitors arriving from either the proposed car park at the west, or the existing car park to the east. A clearly defined, generous entrance should be easily identified from the primary arrival point, in this case most likely from the east where the public transport stop and majority of the vehicle parking is located. Moving the entrance to the east will provide much greater clarity but is likely to require a fundamental redesign of the internal space and massing to allow legible movement through the visitor centre itself and between the

three buildings. The new building offers an opportunity to capture visitors whilst maintaining a public / private split, the triple height also provides the potential for this to be a dramatic space; this should be explored further.

### **Design narrative**

The history of the site and more recent strategic regeneration studies should be presented within the Design and Access Statement to provide a robust narrative together with an options appraisal which justifies the selection of the buildings and proposed uses in each. Likewise a thorough site analysis will assist in telling the story of how the design team have arrived at the final proposal.

### **Internal circulation**

The estimated visitor numbers for the proposed facility seem overly conservative given the city centre context and nearby land uses. Further thought should be given to ensuring the visitor centre comfortably accommodates the regular and efficient movement of large groups of people as well as people who pop in or may be waiting for a tour to start. Movement routes should avoid bottle necks and provide dwell spaces. It should be noted that this site provides a different visitor experience to the existing Penderyn site, in that there is big potential for walk up visitors and we don't feel that this opportunity has been fully resolved.

### **Specialist events advice**

There is clearly an aspiration from the client to deliver a passionate visitor experience which tells the story of both the product and history of copper in the area. The design team should consider engaging with an events and/or exhibition specialist to ensure that the visitor offer is delivered to the highest quality. To capture the strong Penderyn Brand and ensure repeat custom it may be worth considering an annual or bi annual evolving visitor experience.

### **Accessibility**

Thought should be given to how the design can be fully inclusive in terms of physical, sensory and cognitive access. Engaging with a local access consultant as early as possible will help to design for requirements specific to this locality with challenging levels.

### **External space**

Given the dual nature of the development, as both a visitor attraction and functioning distillery, access for servicing and pedestrians should be given careful thought to primarily ensure the safety of visitors. More thought should be given to the design of the landscape in order to provide space for dwell time and trails around the site. A creative interpretation of the Silver Stack base is encouraged. Designing the scheme to allow local people to permeate the site for leisure and recreation, without using the visitor centre and distillery, is crucial for the success of the wider regeneration of the area.

### **Phasing**

The design of the proposal and associated external works should not compromise the future development of the adjacent buildings and sites. The proposed masterplan, future

access points and land uses along with the wider regeneration aspirations should be carefully considered in the design of this scheme. The success of the immediate locality and future phases will strongly echo the success of Penderyn on this site.

DCfW encourages the design team to bring the scheme back for a further design review once the current design concerns have been resolved, as these may have a fundamental impact on the overall scheme. We recommend contacting us early with a view to securing a date for further engagement.

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

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## Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer:	Steve Davies, Neil Quigley – Penderyn Whiskey Paul Relf, Tracy Nichols – City & Council of Swansea
Architect/Consultants:	Ashley Davies – GWP Architecture Keith Patterson – Holloway Partnership Kate Leighton – AECOM
Local Planning Authority:	Simon Hughes, Steve Smith – City & Council of Swansea
Design Review Panel:	
Chair	Cora Kwiatkowski
Lead Panellist	Jamie Yeoman Jonathan Adams Richards Woods Helen Kane Jen Heal, Design Advisor, DCFW Wendy Maden, Design Research Assistant, DCFW