



DESIGN
COMMISSION
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CYMRU

Design Review Report

Penmorfa, Llandudno

DCFW Ref: N171

Meeting of 16th August 2018



Review Status

Meeting date
Issue date
Scheme location
Scheme reference number
Planning status

PUBLIC

16th August 2018
28th August 2018
Llandudno
N171
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 and meeting Agenda items. Any such declarations are recorded here and in DCFW's central records.

Panel member Toby Adam declared that he is working with Kathryn Suther Associates on an unrelated project. All present at the review were content to proceed following the declarations.

Consultations to Date

Pre-application consultation with the local planning authority is underway. Three pre-application consultation meetings have so far taken place between 2016 and March 2018.

Statutory pre-application public consultation was undertaken in April 2017.

The Proposals

The proposal is for a six-storey apartment scheme comprising 45no. two-bedroom apartments on a sensitive site, which is both adjacent to the Great Orme and overlooking the West Shore beach in Llandudno. The Great Orme is a SSSI, a Special Area of Conservation and a National Nature Reserve. The site is within Llandudno Conservation Area and situated adjacent to the Toll House, a Grade II Listed Building. The proposals also include a mix of subterranean and above ground car parking spaces, along with a landscape strategy for the site.

Main Points

DCFW welcomes this discussion with the development and design team at a point where the discussion can still explore ways to add value. This project offers a unique opportunity to work with a valuable site, in terms of both heritage and environmental context, to deliver a high quality design which responds to the setting whilst enhancing it.

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

Vision

The aspiration of both the local authority and design team to deliver a contemporary response of exceptional design quality to this valuable site is encouraging. The panel supported the vision of a contemporary, simple architecture with clean lines and robust materials. However, further design work must be done to achieve this aspiration and realise a project of sufficient quality to enhance its context. Key design objectives should be identified which will guide the design process and fundamental design strategies used to inform and test the rationale.

Design narrative

The design narrative should be simply and clearly presented in the Design and Access Statement. This will allow the local authority and members of the public to follow the logic of the design process and understand why certain design decisions have been made and how they have been justified.

Guidance on good practice in composing Design & Access Statements can be found here: <https://dcfw.org/design-and-access-statements-in-wales-why-what-and-how/>

Site analysis and context guidance can be found here: <https://gov.wales/topics/planning/policy/guidanceandleaflets/site-and-context-analysis-guide/?lang=en>

Different scale and massing options which have been considered should be presented in this material to tell the story of how the final proposal was arrived at. Two buildings on the site could be considered and tested as a way of breaking up the mass, whilst also allowing a phased approach.

Current and proposed site sections could be presented to aid understanding of the site and design decisions.

Architectural approach

The aspiration to create a contemporary, high quality building with simple form and materiality is encouraged on this site. The current proposal could be simplified as the façade is busy with many elements, materials and projections. The architectural approach could play with horizontality and visual breaks to help the building to sit comfortably within the site.

The design team should give careful consideration to how selected materials will be affected by the specific climatic conditions of the site.

Arrival and access

Due to the undercroft parking and change of level within the site, the fully inclusive access is less legible and direct than the stepped access. The stepped access required to move up the 4m level change between the parking level and site entrance also raises concerns about movement and visual impact.

There appears to be two access points from the front of the building, with little hierarchy of importance. Entrance points should be clarified and exploited to aid legibility.

The primary and most convenient access and route should be fully accessible to ensure that no residents or visitors are required to use a 'secondary' access route. Access

should be rationalised to create a primary, legible, fully-accessible route to the front door of the building, which is safe and easy to use for everyone.

The fifth façade

Given the setting adjacent to the Great Orme and the associated elevated viewpoints, the roofscape of the building becomes a 'fifth façade' to consider. This may be an opportunity for a better roofscape or type of green roof as part of the environmental and landscape strategies. Likewise, if solar PV is part of the energy strategy, the impact on the roofscape should be considered early in the design process.

Vehicular infrastructure

The current site layout is dominated by private vehicular infrastructure which is to the detriment of the scheme. A maximum number of spaces, one per bedroom, has been designed into the scheme.

The Design Commission for Wales would challenge whether this is appropriate on a site in a sustainable location which is well served by public transport, therefore reducing reliance on private vehicles. Recent legislation and duties on local authorities including the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and Active Travel Act, require a move away from private vehicle use to more sustainable modes of travel, as does the national de-carbonisation agenda. The sustainable location, legislative context and obvious adverse impact on the scheme suggest that a reduction in the number of spaces would be appropriate on this site.

In supporting this move towards more sustainable travel modes, walking and bicycle parking provision along with electric vehicle charging points should be considered. Storage space for residents should also be considered.

Landscape strategy

There is an aspiration to create a development which sits comfortably in the valuable landscape setting, however the landscape strategy is constrained by the over-provision of private vehicle parking on the site. The current landscape proposals are not commensurate with the valuable landscape context and do not yet maximise the natural capital of the site. A reduction in this vehicular infrastructure would free up space to re-consider the landscape strategy and provide more usable outdoor shared spaces. This may also assist demonstration that the proposals can contribute to the well-being duties placed on the Local Authority. These duties are placed on the whole authority.

Provision of outdoor space for ground floor apartments could also be considered and tested to activate the space around the building and making the apartments more desirable.

The LVIA (Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment) should be undertaken as soon as possible as this will have design implications.

Environmental strategy

At present, insufficient work has been undertaken on the environmental and energy strategy. This strategy should be determined early in the design process in order to explore and test the spatial and architectural implications of these decisions.

Undertaking the strategy at this later stage may result in further complexities or result in 'bolts on' solutions.

Overall the use of these fundamental design strategies, the application of findings of sound site and context analysis as well as the LVIA in testing solutions, should be used to assist a simplification of the design approach.

The Commission would welcome further opportunity to review the scheme with the aim of enhancing the potential of the scheme through the achievement of good design quality through constructive dialogue.

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

Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer:	Dilwyn Lloyd, Anwyl Homes
Design Team:	Steve Goodwin, Goodwin Planning Services Matt Jones, Matthew Jones Architects Julie Barr, Tirlun Barr Associates Jeannie Willan, Kathryn Sather Associates
Design Review Panel:	
Chair	Kedrick Davies
Lead Panellist	Simon Carne Amanda Spence Toby Adam Lynne Sullivan Wendy Maden, Design Advisor, DCFW