

# Design Review Report

Cefn Coed Hospital, Swansea

**DCFW Ref: N183**

Meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> February 2019



<b>Review Status</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> February 2019
Issue date	27 <sup>th</sup> February 2019
Scheme location	Swansea
Scheme description	Residential
Scheme reference number	N183
Planning status	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.

Stride Treglown, Cora Kwiatkowski's employer, has worked for the NHS Trust but are not involved in this project. Panel member Phil Roberts is on the board of Velindre NHS Trust. Panel member Mark Hallett has employed WYG and WSP on separate projects. Steve Smith from the City and County of Swansea is also a Design Review Panellist. All present confirmed that they were content to proceed with this declaration.

## Consultations to Date

---

No consultation to date.

## The Proposals

---

The proposal is for residential development to provide new housing units on the site of part of the existing Cefn Coed Hospital. The proposals retain the water tower and other selected parts of the existing hospital buildings for conversion to residential use. Other parts of the complex will be demolished and replaced by approximately 350 new homes, a link road, recreation facilities and ancillary development.

## Main Points

---

We welcomed the opportunity to review the emerging masterplan for this site at this stage. It is positive that the scheme has developed from the previous iteration in 2015 and this was an appropriate stage to review and add value to the masterplan. The following points summarise key issues from the review that should be considered in further design development and engagement with the local community.

### **Vision**

The NHS Trust, in planning the disposal of this site, have a duty to set a vision that addresses the goals of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. This should take into account the quality of the residential environment that is created, the environmental impact of future development and the wellbeing of future and neighbouring residents. Any ambitions in relation to this duty were not made clear in the presentation and material provided.

The location of this site on the edge of the built up area of Swansea presents a challenge to counter the car dominated urban sprawl that exists in the surrounding area. This requires a bolder vision linked to the disposal strategy for the site that aims to maximise the value of the site to enable investment in placemaking.

A narrative around how people will live here and connect into the existing context, and the contribution that the development will make to the health and wellbeing of residents will be helpful in establishing the vision for the site.

### **Character and retention of existing buildings**

The retention of existing buildings on the site and their integration with the proposed development is important for the character and uniqueness of the scheme. Most of the original complex appears to have been well built, is in relatively sound condition and has a distinctive character. The rationale for proposed retention was outlined but this needs to be checked against the current context and updated given the changes to the site and development parcels that are now considered viable. The possibility of further retention should not be ruled out and even encouraged as the existing buildings do have placemaking value.

The character of the proposed masterplan should be developed at this stage in line with the unique characteristics of the existing context and setting. Little analysis of the character and appearance of the surrounding context was presented. This is needed at this stage to inform the current proposals.

Meanwhile and flexible uses should be considered for the existing buildings as part of the placemaking approach. There may be the opportunity for small business including promoting a live/work provision or community use within some of the spaces which could form part of the mix of uses in the future development. This should be considered particularly for the area around the water tower which is shown as a public square on the emerging masterplan. For this space to be successful, consideration needs to be given to what will bring life to it and how to activate its edges.

Opportunities for custom and self-build should be explored and integrated where appropriate.

### **Movement and connections**

Active travel must be integrated as an option for movement to and from the development. A number of routes were identified for footpath and cycle links but work will be needed in conjunction with the Local Authority to ensure that these are safe and usable. More information is required on and consideration given as to where people will be walking to and from, such as to school or local bus stops, and what these journeys will be like. It is disappointing that a pedestrian connection, that was identified in the previous masterplan, has been lost with the development of the parcel of land to the south and the reasons for this should be investigated.

It is positive that consideration is being given to green pedestrian and cycle links through the site at this stage. The section of site still retained for hospital use could become a barrier to movement across the site and links across this area should be identified and incorporated into the scheme. The boundaries between the hospital and proposed development should be positively addressed.

Whilst every effort should be made to positively integrate active travel and public transport to make it easy and efficient, a realistic approach must be taken to car use and parking. A range of parking arrangements must be integrated into future layouts to avoid a car-dominated environment. Consideration should be given to views into the site to avoid parked cars to become too prominent. There is concern that one road in and out of the development will result in congestion on local roads and on the road itself and further studies are needed to establish the impact of this. A connecting through-route is a possible consideration with a design approach that would help to prevent 'rat running'.

### **Environmental strategy**

The environmental ambitions of the development must be set out and considered at this stage. Little evidence was given to show that this has fed into the current layout and further consideration needs to be given to such issues as orientation, renewable energy and the potential reuse of materials on site.

### **Development edges and layout**

The elevation of this site means that development will be visible from the surrounding area to the north and south. Therefore consideration needs to be given to how these edges are treated. Outward facing development to the north of the site seems to be the right approach but design guidance is needed to ensure that the long distance view is appropriately addressed by the landscape treatment of the street and not dominated by cars and a wall of housing.

Principles for good design of residential development on slopes should form part of the guidance for developers to avoid common pitfalls.

### **Next steps**

This is an appropriate stage to draw out the key principles for the future development of the site based on the opportunities and constraints that have been identified and the vision that needs to be developed. These principles should be set out clearly in the final masterplan document.

Sample blocks should be worked up to show how the principles can be applied to the layout. There is a need for character areas and associated design code to be developed in the process.

An engagement process should be established alongside the masterplanning and disposal process to ensure that stakeholders and local residents have been involved in the process.

We welcome the opportunity to review the masterplan again before the planning application is submitted and encourage the team to arrange a date for this at the earliest opportunity.

---

**Comisiwn Dylunio Cymru Design Commission for Wales is the trading name of DCFW LIMITED, a Private Limited Company established under the Companies Act 1985 and 2006, Company No: 04391072 incorporated in England and Wales as a wholly owned subsidiary of the Welsh Government. Registered office: 4<sup>th</sup> Floor,**

**Cambrian Buildings, Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff CF10 5FL T: 029 2045 1964 E [connect@dcfw.org](mailto:connect@dcfw.org). The comment recorded in this report, arising from formal Design Review through our Design Review Service, is provided in the public interest for the consideration of local planning authorities as a material consideration, and other users of the Design Review Service. It is not and should not be considered 'advice' and no third party is bound or required to act upon it. The Design Review Service is delivered in line with DCFW's published protocols, code of conduct and complaints procedure, which should be read and considered by users of the service.**

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

---

## Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer:	Clive Ball, NHS Wales Caroline Lewis, NHS Wales
Architect/Consultants:	Jonathan Vining, WYG Group Mary O'Connor, WYG Group
Local Authority:	David Owen, CCS Steve Smith, CCS
Design Review Panel:	
Chair	Cora Kwiatowski
Lead Panellist	Angela Williams Chris Jefford Mark Hallett Mike Gwyther-Jones Jen Heal, Design Advisor, DCFW
Observers:	Jun Huang Larissa Berquo, DCFW