

Design Review Report

Ffordd Glan-y-Mor, Aberffraw

DCFW Ref: N208

Meeting of 19th September 2019



Review Status

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

Public

19th September 2019
27th September 2019
Aberffraw
Residential
N208
Application Withdrawn

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.

Consultations to Date

No previous reviews by DCFW.

The Proposals

Planning permission exists for a 2-storey house on this site. The current proposal is for a contemporary, boathouse-style 3-storey, 3-bedroom dwelling on the higher part the sloping site. Residential accommodation is proposed on the middle and upper floor, with the ground floor given over to storage due to potential flood risk.

The main materials are painted render and natural slate tiles, with vertically orientated western red cedar on the east and west gables and zinc sheeting for the detailing of the eaves, verges and other areas. The side elevations show a random window arrangement. The home would be gable fronted to the river with vehicle access and parking to the front.

A planning application has been withdrawn following feedback from the LPA conservation officer and pending the outcome of this review.

Main Points

Form Massing and Orientation

Whilst terraced houses with rooflines that follow the line of the road are most prevalent in the area, the overall picture of the settlement from across the water is mixed and informal. The massing model, which doesn't include any of the materials and details, indicates that the height, form, mass and orientation is appropriate within this context. It does not appear overly tall and the gable frontage does not appear alien. However, when the materials and details are shown the building becomes too prominent against an otherwise modest and anonymous backdrop.

Whilst the site and context analysis was thoroughly demonstrated and clearly explained, providing a clear rationale for many of the decisions made, the boathouse 'theme' was the least convincing part of the narrative. While there are some wider local references, pursuit of this stylistic approach seems to be working against the success of creating a residential dwelling that is appropriate to its context. It is the view of the panel that exploring alternative options for the vision of the dwelling could result in a more appropriate and sympathetic response.

Materials and Details

The materials and details associated with the boathouse theme are resulting in a vertical emphasis in terms of perception, at odds with its context. The wooden cladding, projecting frame, mix of window arrangements and balcony details all also add to the 'volume' of the building. Simplification will help significantly.

If the height of the building can be reduced even a little this would help address concerns regarding scale, however, addressing perceived height of the building could have more significant benefits. The projecting frame over-emphasises the three storeys and adds to the perceived height. Exploring whether an alternative material for the lower level to form a plinth with the two-storey frame above or reducing the projection of the frame could help to reduce the appearance of height.

The treatment of each floor should be considered with attention given to how elements reflect or deliberately contrast common features of the context. For example, the proportions and orientation of the windows could be reflected. Simplifying the lower floor will help it to sit back into the site and create a plinth, linking in with the horizontal orientation of the existing stone walls that are prominent along the river.

The proposed use of the different floors should be reviewed against the flood risk and whether they are within or outside of the floodplain.

Access and Parking

The proposed access and parking locations are logical, given that rear access is not possible. Parking should be hidden as much as possible. Moving the opening of the wall to the left-hand side and restoring the wall will help to improve the boundary. Views from the track alongside the house could help in the assessment of responses to this boundary.

Environmental Strategy

The proposed use of an air source heat pump is appropriate but the implications of this need to be understood and integrated at this stage in the design. The location of the external element of the heat pump should be defined prior to a revised planning submission and the impact on site acoustics understood and mitigated if necessary. The building's air tightness and insulation should be at a level suitable to heat pump derived space heating. The design should also consider how hot water can be generated without relying on inefficient and expensive immersion heaters, or significantly impact the heat pump's efficiency.

Next Steps

Overall the development of this site is appropriate and will help to complete the frontage. The analysis undertaken has led to rational decisions regarding the height, massing and orientation of the building, but further work is needed to address the appearance against

its context through consideration of materials and detailing. A contemporary approach and the desired level of quality are appropriate, but design development must continue to find an approach that is sensitive to the mixed but overall low-key nature of the context. The expertise of a planning consultant who understands the local context may be helpful.

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

Attendees

Design Team:	Randal Turner, Raise Architects
Agent/Client/Developer:	Richard Williams, Client
Design Review Panel:	
Chair	Cora Kwiatkowski
Lead Panellist	John Lloyd
Panel	Martin Knight
	Andrew Linfoot
	Alister Kratt
	Neil Williamson
	Carol-Anne Davies, DCFW
	Jen Heal, DCFW