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Design Review Report

Adamsdown Primary School,
Cardiff

28th November 2013



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.

Review Status

CONFIDENTIAL

Meeting date	28 th November 2013
Issue date	18 th December 2013
Scheme location	Adamsdown, Cardiff
Scheme description	Redevelopment of Primary School
Scheme reference number	23
Planning status	Pre-application

Declarations of Interest

None declared.

Consultations to Date

Consultation with the community is currently in progress.

The Proposals

This is a project to extend an existing primary school to Two Form Entry (2FE) with 420 places including nursery. The existing building is single-storey, built in 1978 and extended in 2011. An easement route including a redundant sewer, electric mains cable and level change, divides the site into two halves. The playing fields to the south of the existing building provide a possible development area. Three feasibility study options are being considered:

- Extending the existing school with a new wing (crosses easement)
- Extending the existing school with a new stand-alone building adjacent
- Demolishing and replacing the existing school with a pre-designed, new build, two-storey T-shaped template school

It is not intended to relocate the school during building works.

A Design and Build procurement route is proposed, with occupation by September 2015 to accommodate increasing pupil numbers.

Summary

- The working reference to BB99 standards is positive. However, the project needs a brief for the new school which is specific to this site, its relationship to the local

environment and the extra facilities required. The requirements set out in the brief should be precise, and should guide the design, procurement and construction.

- This new school is an important investment in the local community, so it is good to hear that consultation has taken place. Feedback from consultation must now inform the vision and design for the new school.
- A detailed feasibility study is needed to allow all the options to be properly understood. The feasibility study should include analysis of costs, energy, quality, buildability and community benefit. Options should include the following:
 - Working with the existing building
 - A new template school
 - New bespoke building
- DCFW welcome the opportunity to see this project at an early stage in the design process. It would be useful review the scheme again once designs have evolved and more information and material are available.

Main Points in Detail

Brief

A strong vision and detailed brief are required, which relate to the specific requirements, context and constraints of this project. BB99 will inform the functional brief, but this must be tailored to the site, and should keep in mind the existing building.

Feedback from consultations should inform the detailed brief. The team has acknowledged that the current school is already over-full, and this must be remembered when reviewing feedback.

The brief should set out how the Flying Start facility and any other community facilities might be integrated with the rest of the school.

Analysis and Feasibility

In order to evaluate the options properly, background information and analysis is needed, as well as the detailed brief. The options can then be tested against these.

Analysis should include buildings and facilities surrounding the site, including proposals for a new building on the plot to the north of the site and the redundant church which is used as a community facility. This should establish a development brief for the entire site, followed by urban design proposals, which may include release of some parts of the site for other development.

More analysis of the existing building is required to evidence the argument for whether to keep it or demolish it. This analysis should keep in mind environmental issues, recent refurbishments, cost of further refurbishment, internal circulation, and suitability of scale and arrangement of spaces. How a new extension or separate building would link to the existing building must also be thought about.

A thorough analysis of the existing school and site, highlighting what works well and what needs to be improved, will help with appraisal of options. The new school should have all the benefits of the old, plus more.

The new/remodelled school on this site will become a piece of townscape. In this urban block setting, the new building should address the edges and boundaries. The existing school building does not have a street edge and is vulnerable to vandalism.

The presence of the easement running through the site will influence the feasibility study.

It is acknowledged that there is a drive from Welsh Government to consider 'template' schools, as they are thought to give better cost certainty. Any template building design should be tested on the site in the same way as a bespoke building or extension: Does the form work well on the site, and what are the spaces around it like? The team should also investigate what a bespoke design could achieve within the budget of a template design. It is understood that several template options are available. Each configuration should be analysed on the site.

The team mentioned that Stride Treglown Architects are working on a template school design, and that Stride Treglown also works for Cardiff Council. Any conflict of interest should be declared and managed.

The feasibility study should include assessment of options in terms the following:

- Outdoor spaces
- Energy efficiency/BREEAM
- Daylighting
- Cost (robust cost analysis required)
- Orientation and relationship to surroundings
- Access, arrival, entrance and parking
- Scale and impact
- Quality
- Maintenance and security
- Buildability and construction logistics
- Access, use and school safety during construction

Outside spaces are important to the functioning of a school. These need to be planned and designed to high standard as well as the actual building. There will be a hierarchy of outside spaces relating to arrival, play, movement through the site and parking.

Programme

It is understood that a completion date of September 2015 is aimed for in order to accommodate an increase in pupils. However, this programme looks extremely tight. The increase in pupil numbers will be incremental, and this might be factored into decisions about the programme.

There are many risks associated with any building project. There should be some contingency in the programme to minimise the impact of these risks.

It is most important that the client gets a school that meets their needs in the long term and is designed and built to a high quality. A longer programme would be advisable to achieve this, and to allow a comprehensive approach to be taken to the design and procurement processes.

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

Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer:	Rachel Smith, Cardiff Council Sion Lewis, Cardiff Council
Architectural/Urban Designer:	Gavin Taylor, Cardiff Council Gari Evans, Cardiff Council Robyn Thomas, Cardiff Council
Planning Authority:	Lawrence Dowdall, Planning Officer
Design Review Panel:	
Chair	Ewan Jones
Lead Panellist	Lynne Sullivan Kedrick Davies Simon Carne Amanda Spence, Design Advisor, DCFW
Observing:	Carole-Anne Davies, DCFW Angharad Davies, Maya Hussein