

Design Review Report

Meadowside, Reynoldston, Gower

DCFW Ref: 73

Meeting of 21st May 2015



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

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

PUBLIC

21st May 2015
2nd June 2015
Reynoldston, Gower
House extension
73
Pre-application

Declarations of Interest

None declared.

Consultations to Date

The local planning authority has been consulted.

The Proposals

The proposal is to extend an existing house to the side and rear to provide extra living space, ground and first floor offices, storage and a new master bedroom. The existing house is situated in Reynoldston in the Gower with residential neighbours on both sides. The extensive south-facing garden slopes downwards away from the house, providing views across the landscape.

Main Points in Detail

The following points summarise key issues from the review, and should be used to inform work ahead of making a planning application or further Design Review:

Design Approach

The Design Commission for Wales is supportive of the intention to maximise the benefits of the site – landscape views, sun and garden – through the reconfiguration and extension of the existing house.

Given the limited architectural merit of the existing house and the lack of consistency of built form in the immediate vicinity, the Commission is content with the principle of a contemporary design approach to this scheme, which the design team can clearly justify. However, more work is required to find the best articulation of this approach.

It is important that there is a rationale to the design process and that all design decisions can be justified in relation to the aims of the scheme and planning guidance. It is not clear whether a series of design options have been considered and evaluated in the development of this project to date.

It was very helpful to see previous work by Catalina Architecture and Design used as precedent for this scheme, which demonstrates the capability, skill and reputation for quality for which the practice is recognised. There is an elegant simplicity in much of this previous work which is not yet coming through in this proposal. Simplification of the form and layout offers potential to improve the proposal.

Form and layout

The Design Commission agrees that a flat roof is the best option for this scheme and the final finish of that roof could also add ecological richness and value. A pitched roof would not sit comfortably with the form of the existing house and would worsen the impact on the neighbour to the west, which is at a lower level than the proposal site.

The proposed layout and form work well at ground floor level, but we would suggest that the first floor proposal would benefit from reconsideration. The proposed layout at first floor adds complexity to the scheme, especially through the cantilever which extends the upper floor to the boundary of the property. A simpler form and layout might reduce building costs and improve the relationship with the existing house, garden, landscape views and neighbouring properties.

Simplified options might consider elongating the extension further out into the garden or a wider single storey extension. The relatively large garden allows plenty of options to be explored. The level changes that exist could add to the interest and overall design approach.

Consideration in spatial and visual terms should also be given to the energy strategy for the house generally and, if a log stove is to be included, the positioning and external finishes of any flue.

Planning

The Design Commission suggests that revising the proposal, addressing the issues raised in this review, might enable discussions with the local planning authority to progress in a more productive way. It is positive that pre-application consultation with the LPA has been sought at an early stage when there is scope to develop the design, and it would be valuable if that consultation continued.

Although the existing house and its immediate surroundings are not remarkable, there are many planning sensitivities associated with building in the Gower. For this reason, the client might also benefit from employing the services of a professional planning consultant.

Next steps

The Commission recommends that a number of strategic options for the house extension and reconfiguration are explored and tested, taking into account the comments made at this review and recorded in this report. The options tested should be recorded and

presented with any planning application submission as part of the rationale and justification for the final proposed option.

The physical model presented at the review was useful for quickly understanding the impact of the design. Rougher, working models might be a useful way to explore different approaches.

The Design Commission for Wales would welcome the opportunity to review this scheme again prior to a planning application being made.

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

Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer:	David Doughty, Client
Architect/Planning Consultant:	David Thomas, Catalina Architecture Zeta Freeman, Catalina Architecture
Local Authority:	Not present
Design Review Panel:	
Chair	Jen Heal, Design Advisor, DCFW
Lead Panellist	Kedrick Davies
Panel	Lynne Sullivan Mike Gwyther-Jones Amanda Spence, Design Advisor, DCFW Carole-Anne Davies, Chief Executive, DCFW
Observing:	Max Hampton, Welsh Government Jon Fudge, Welsh Government