

Design Review Report

Glasfryn Lane, St Davids

DCFW Ref: 133

Meeting of 16th March 2017



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

16th March 2017
30th March 2017
Pembrokeshire
Residential Development
N133
Pre-application

Declarations of Interest

None declared.

Consultations to Date

DCFW provided comments on proposals for the site based on a desk top review of material that was supplied in January 2017. This was in advance of preapplication meetings with the Local Planning Authority.

The Proposals

Residential development of a greenfield site comprising affordable and open market units and development of a hotel.

Main Points

We welcomed the opportunity to review the proposals for this significant site on the edge of the city of St Davids. The development of this site is a rare opportunity to significantly contribute to the settlement and the ambitions of the Community Land Trust; it will also have a wider impact on the contribution to the community. With this opportunity comes a responsibility to meet the needs of the community whilst also leaving a positive legacy befitting of the natural and historical significance of this place.

The Vision and Masterplan

The architectural vision and concept of living differently that was presented in the review and has been subject to consultation with the local community is compelling. The Design Commission supports the intention to a move away from place-less suburban housing and the intention to provide a built form that is responsive to how people want to live in a more sustainable way with a greater sense of community. However, this architectural ambition which is expressed in some of the sketches, is currently not translating into the proposed layout for the site.

Two fundamental things were identified in the review as being needed to move the proposals forward:

Firstly, evidence and summary of context and site analysis is needed. The documentation to inform the development, and thus support the design, should provide a narrative of how this development will fit into the fabric of the city and tell the story of how the design has been developed in response to the unique features of the site itself. Whilst we have been told that this exists it is not evident in the material or how the proposals are presented so the link is not being clearly made.

Part of this will also include the potential for future connectivity to the south of the site.

Secondly, a comprehensive masterplan, that translates the vision into something that is deliverable given the different ownerships and requirements of the site, is needed. There must be an element of cohesiveness across the site, based on the site and context analysis and vision.

Without this masterplan, there is a lack of certainty around how the vision, and the rationale behind the design, is translated into the layout. In some instances the vision may lead to the layout moving away from standard urban design principles, such as treatment of the edge of the site or the arrangement of fronts and backs, but without the rationale it is difficult to justify this.

The masterplan must eliminate the clear distinction that has been apparent in the proposals to date between the treatment of social and private housing, as two separate entities of completely contrasting density and layout. A sense of equity and integration must be developed across the site even if the social housing element cannot be pepper potted through the scheme. The central hedgerow through the site appears to be causing particular problems in this respect and the value of retaining it all, given these challenges, is worth considering.

To help achieve some unity across the site it would be helpful to set up some guiding principles. This may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Edges – what people see when driving into the city
- Space hierarchy – common public spaces could unify the site whilst smaller incidental spaces could respond to the requirements of different uses
- Public and private space – a clear understanding of relationship between public and private space, how this is treated and how it will be managed.
- Road treatment – to avoid the development being dominated by highways it is important to establish how the streets will be designed and maintained, for example whether they will be adopted.

The most recent revision that was presented at the review has a lower density which is welcomed, however it appears to be too highway dominated at this stage.

Hotel

The hotel must fit into the wider masterplan and landscape setting. Particular attention should be given to the treatment of the corner, particularly the upper floor which currently presents a blank upper floor facade to the street. Consideration could be given to how void within the roof space could be used more effectively and honestly to provide additional accommodation and improve this elevation. Legibility and the quality the experience of arriving at the hotel as well as the lasting impression of leaving the site should inform where the access point is located. This experience would be much better if

access was possible from Fishguard Road and this should be explored again with the local highways officer.

Next Steps

A significant amount of work has been undertaken in the years leading up to this point. It is important at this stage to distil all the work that has been done down into a concise summary using plans and diagrams so that it is clear and the design intent can be established in a deliverable way. The Design Commission would welcome and encourage further opportunities to review and work with the developers and their design teams to translate their vision and contextual analysis into a high-quality response to their brief and this special location.

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

Attendees

Architect/Design Team:	Andrew Cook, Inspire Design Mike Lawless, LA Architects
Consultants:	Geraint John, GJ Planning
Client Team:	Bill Preece, St Davids Community Land Trust Len Cotton, St Davids Community Land Trust Nigel Sinnett, Pembrokeshire Housing Association Nick James, Swangate Developments
Local Planning Authority:	Nicola Gandy, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Matt Dash, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park
Design Review Panel:	
Chair	Simon Richards
Lead Panellist	Elfed Roberts
Panel	Simon Carne Alister Kratt

Observers

Jen Heal, Design Advisor, DCFW
Carole-Anne Davies, Chief Executive, DCFW
Gayna Jones, Chair DCFW
Hayley Kemp, Richard Matthams – Bridgend CBC