

Design Review Report

Bank House, Trefin,
Pembrokeshire

DCFW Ref: N136

Meeting of 17th August 2017



Review Status

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

CONFIDENTIAL

17th August 2017
4th September 2017
Pembrokeshire
Residential
N136
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.

None declared.

Consultations to Date

Consultation on the proposed scheme has not yet taken place.

The Proposals

The proposed development is for 3no. detached dwellings, each designed to Passivhaus standard. The site layout comprises parking and access to the north with gardens for each house located to the south.

Within the centre of Trefin, part of a conservation area, the site lies on a south facing, sloping field on the southern edge of the village, to the east of Bank House farm. Trefin is characterised by a vernacular of simple volume, two storey pitched roof houses that line the street frontages through the village. Materials for the historic housing within the village are a mix of stone, render and painted stone. There are a number of 1960s cul-de-sac developments located on the outer peripheries of the village. The proposed site for this project takes its access from a C20th cul-de-sac of 7 houses.

The site had a previous permission for 3no. dwellings which expired earlier this year. Due to changes in affordable housing requirements and completion of surveys the site is now being taken forward for development.

Main Points

The Design Commission welcomes the proposal to create high quality, Passivhaus dwellings on the site and this aspiration should be commended. The east-west orientation of development on the sloping site seems sensible in relation to the access point, so is broadly supported.

The following points summarise key issues from the review and should be considered to inform further work on the scheme:

Site analysis

The information presented does not demonstrate a thorough analysis or understanding of the site, surrounding context and climatic considerations. This analysis should include the scale, massing and materiality of the vernacular of the village to ensure that the proposal appropriately responds to the immediate setting and conservation area. A narrative which clearly explains how the site analysis drives the form of the proposals should be presented within the Design and Access Statement. Guidance documents prepared by DCFW on behalf of Welsh Government address both site and context analysis and preparing a Design and Access Statement and should be referred to. <http://gov.wales/topics/planning/policy/guidanceandleaflets/design-and-access-statements-in-wales/?skip=1&lang=en>
<http://gov.wales/topics/planning/policy/guidanceandleaflets/site-and-context-analysis-guide/?lang=en>

Building form

The Design Commission supports the aspiration to design a contemporary residential development, however, the response should better respond to the context. The design could reference the vernacular simplicity of form in a contemporary way, allowing for delight to be designed into the detail. This would avoid the visual clutter which is present in the current proposals, currently justified only on the basis of 'visual interest'. Although the choice of materials is justified in terms of local character and robustness to withstand the climate conditions, the complex form and complicated use of materials could lead to unnecessary maintenance issues and adverse weathering which a simpler form would avoid. Whilst being more contextual, simplicity of form could also allow easier delivery of Passivhaus principles and reduce the cost of delivering the development.

Passivhaus design

The extent of south-facing glazing could create challenges in achieving Passivhaus certification due to large amounts of solar gain. This could cause an over reliance on cooling or costly fenestration which may not sufficiently mitigate the issue. A simplicity of form and fenestration would avoid excessive solar gain and the large amount of associated thermal bridging, significantly reducing the challenges to certification, construction cost and risks associated with the climate in the area.

Building layout

Although the houses are generous in size overall, the kitchen appears to be disproportionately narrow. A reconfigured open-plan living space which incorporates the kitchen could be considered for these contemporary homes.

Public realm

The relationship between the dwellings and the public realm should be better considered to allow natural surveillance and a strong visual connection between inside and out. The intermediary spaces between the parking spaces and dwellings could be better utilised as welcoming front courtyards.

Next Steps

Further review and justification of the proposals are required for development in this location. A further review meeting would be valuable and should be coordinated with DCFW's design review programme to secure an appropriate slot.

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

Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer:	Richard Gambold, Green Gull Ltd
Architect/Planning Consultant:	Julian Bishop & Andrew Jones
Local Planning Authority:	Andrew Richards, Pembrokeshire Coast NPA
Design Review Panel:	
Chair	Jon Vernon-Smith
Lead Panellist	Simon Richards
	Mike Gwyther-Jones
	Jonathan Hines
	Matt Thomas
	Amanda Spence, Design Advisor, DCFW
	Carole-Anne Davies, CE, DCFW
	Jen Heal, Design Advisor, DCFW
	Wendy Maden, Design Research Assistant, DCFW