

Design Review Report

Police Station Site – Port Talbot

DCFW Ref: 66

Meeting of 20th March 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	20 th March 2015
Issue date	9 th April 2015
Scheme location	Port Talbot
Scheme description	Residential & Commercial
Scheme reference number	66
Planning status	Pre-planning

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Declarations of Interest

None declared.

Consultations to Date

Pre-application consultation has been undertaken with the local authority.

This development forms part of NPTCBC Vibrant and Viable places programme. The Design Commission for Wales has had a presentation from Neath Port Talbot CBC's regeneration team in relation to the Vibrant and Viable Places (VVP) programme which is focused on Port Talbot. A workshop session was also undertaken focusing on proposals for the public realm at the front of the Police Station site. Gwalia and their architect were invited to the workshop session as the two projects are closely linked. Whilst the main attention was paid to the public realm, the design of the proposed building on the Police Station site was discussed in relation to its impact on and relationship to the public space.

The Proposals

The proposal is for the redevelopment of the site of the Police Station in Port Talbot. The development will consist of three ground floor commercial units and 30 one bed residential units.

The redevelopment of this site forms part of the Vibrant and Viable Places (VVP) programme that consists of a number of projects focused on Port Talbot town centre. One of the aims of the VVP programme is to increase the number of people living in the town centre, to which this project will contribute. VVP funding will also contribute to public realm and transport interchange works in the area to the front of the Police Station site. This has the potential to significantly change the nature and function of this space and the two projects should be considered in conjunction with one another.

Main Points in Detail

The Design Commission welcomed the positive changes that had been made to the design in the short time since the scheme was seen as part of the VVP workshop. Whilst the designs are still being worked through, the revised scale and form of the building (to create areas of four and five storey), and the raising of the floor to ceiling height at the ground floor has improved the presence of the building as a backdrop to the public space.. The following is a summary of the key points raised in the review:

Grove Place

The positive changes to the massing and form of the main elevation of the building now need to be worked through to the secondary Grove Place elevation. As there are no occupied units on the ground floor in this section of the building, the increased floor to ceiling height is not necessary and consideration should be given to lowering this section of the building so that it better addresses the residential properties adjacent (though acknowledging that an internal step will be needed at first floor level).

The vehicle entrance height should be reviewed to establish whether the entrance could be lowered to reduce its dominance. Bin collection is possible from the street so only cars and maintenance vehicles would need access.

Rear elevation

The design emphasis has been on the front elevation but the rear should also be appropriately addressed. The flat roof areas could become terraces for those living on the upper floors. This would not necessarily need to cover the whole roof area but some outdoor space would contribute positively to residential amenity.

Balconies

The proposed full and Juliet balconies would encourage greater levels of natural surveillance and interaction between the properties and the public realm.

Corner treatment

The design of the prominent Station Road/Grove Place corner is generally supported but requires some further refinement to the positioning of the slot windows and the detail of the corner column.

The south west corner of the building could also be refined to improve the adjacent space. For example, moving the gate back and introducing corner windows (on all floors, not just ground) would provide more surveillance and reduce the risk of it becoming a dead space.

Materials

The proposed use of brick as the primary material is a strong design concept that will need to be well detailed and protected to ensure its integrity. This will include maintaining the set-back of the windows and the slim depth between the window and roofline as indicated in the initial model views.

The introduction of two other materials should be worked through in the design process to ensure that they do actually enhance the design and not detract from the impact of

the main brick material. Bromely by Bow is an example of a predominantly brick design that could be looked at alongside the precedents already identified by the design team.

Internal space

The width of the corridor within the accessible flat could be integrated into the living space.

A matter to consider for the design team and client is whether the step up in the roof line will provide greater volume in the associated apartment.

Shopfront and signage

To maintain the integrity of the overall appearance of the building the use of signage and canopies associated with the retail units should be carefully controlled. The Commission were pleased that the shop frontages will be installed by the developer, but strongly recommended that the developer and planners insist that all commercial signage is installed behind the glass frontages

Public realm

Due to the close relationship between the proposed new building and the public space to the front of it the client and design team must be a stakeholder in the design development of the public space. The emerging proposals for the building should shape and inform the public space to ensure that the public realm enhances the amenity of the residents and the success of the commercial units at ground floor.

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

Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer: Elfed Roberts, Grwp Gwalia

Architectural/Landscape Designer: Ian Standen, Stride Treglown
Chloe Hayman, Stride Treglown

(Rob Wheaton, Stride Treglown absent due to illness)

Local Authority:

Nicola Lake, NPTCBC

Design Review Panel:
Chair

Alan Francis
Jamie Brewster
Toby Adams
Michael Gwyther-Jones
Richard Woods
Jen Heal, Design Advisor, DCFW