

## DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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.



# Design Review Report

## Review status

**PUBLIC**

Meeting date

Thursday 14th March 2013

Issue date

Thursday 28th March 2013

Scheme location

Land adjacent to 34 Southward Lane, Newton, Swansea. SA3 4QD

Scheme description

Residential

Scheme reference number

81A

Planning status

App submitted 14.11.2012

Declaration of interests

A full declaration was made by Elfed Roberts in respect of an existing working relationship with the design team.

## Consultations to date

A previous application for a more traditional design of dwelling was refused with a contemporary design considered more appropriate.

Although a scheme has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority, the proposals presented differ significantly from this.

## Summary

The Panel was pleased to receive a presentation on this project which is situated in the village of Newton on the edge of the Conservation Area. Conservation issues relevant to this site specifically are unclear and the Panel felt that clarity on this point is needed in order to understand exactly what characteristics of the site are important to the conservation area. It was understood that the relevant SPG and area designation is to be reviewed. The Panel felt that maintaining the gap between other houses in the area was not critical to the conservation area status as this had resulted from an accident of development, rather than being purposefully designed to provide a view.

The Panel is supportive of the principal of development on the site. They appreciate it is a complex plot but would prefer to see some physical evidence of any building at street level, so that it is clear there is a house on the site. The Panel thought that the public and private areas of the site were not yet clearly defined in this proposal.

The Panel were encouraged by the design approach and proposed materials; green roofs, stone walls and timber. The Panel suggested that drawings and 3D views should all clearly illustrate the context and surrounding buildings for the planning process.

The Design and Access Statement (DAS) should be augmented with clear diagrammatic and text descriptions of the rationale behind the new concept design and why/how this has developed over time.

### **Discussion and Panel response in full**

The Panel were appreciative of the difficulties of this very steep sloping site with views over Underhill Park, and the sea beyond, that the Local Planning Authority are keen to maintain. However, the Panel thought that this viewing opportunity is not necessarily characteristic of the Conservation Area. There are some issues of neighbour overlooking to consider, not least a new dwelling recently built near the lower part of the site.

Since the initial planning application was refused, several ideas have been explored by the design team. The Panel felt that a concise narrative document explaining the history and analysis of the site and design development of the scheme, would be useful to accompany the planning application.

The current proposal is for the site to be terraced with the building sitting in the terraces, although this limits the view of the house from the road which raises issues of security and clarity of public/private space. The Panel thought the proposal shown had considerable potential but should be lifted or adapted so that a single storey, or top floor pavilion, could be seen from the street demonstrating that the site is occupied, and providing a more direct entrance to the house. The development of the section is a key design tool on this scheme, and more convincing drawings in plan, section and elevation are required.

The Panel thought that the view provided by the gap in development was not a deliberate design or characteristic to be protected, but had evolved accidentally over time. The definition of issues conservation relative to the site is not clear and the Panel thought this a key area requiring clarification. Visuals of the site along Southward Lane would be beneficial, as would views back to the site from Underhill Park.

The current proposals for using the slope of the site were good in principle as are the use of a limited palette of natural materials; stone, timber and turfed roofs. The Panel questioned whether the green roof area could be used as outside space and, if so, questioned how adding balustrades could be achieved without significantly altering on the impact of the design. Likewise the leading edges of the green roofs and the treatment of the eaves needs to be clearer and realistic, especially dealing with roof depth.

The proposal was not clear in terms of how security issues such as boundary fencing, gates and access were being managed. The boundary treatment for the site needs to be carefully considered so that it enhances the design concept, rather than competes with it.

The Panel felt that these early stage designs are on the right track conceptually but need simplification and refinement. For instance, an external staircase separates the building from the landscape. The Panel suggested that this stair, which defines the edge of one 'wing' might be brought closer to the centre of the plan allowing each end of the terraces to have a similar relationship to the surrounding sloped ground. The client was also keen for the house to have a lift facility and the Panel thought that if more of the house was visible above ground level, this may provide an opportunity to incorporate a lift into the design as well as resolving the awkward entrance sequence

The Panel would welcome a further review of the scheme as it develops but did not necessarily think that a full design review was needed. The Panel are happy to review and comment on the Design and Access Statement prior to the planning application if required. This may be in the form of written comment on fresh material being brought to the Commission in a timely manner, to allow us to comment further.

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

## Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer

Mr & Mrs Johnson

Architectural/Urban Designer

Michael Batcup  
Will Stewart

City & County of Swansea

Planning Authority

Lynne Davies  
Huw Jenkins

Design Review Panel

Chair

Lead Panellist

Ewan Jones  
Toby Adam  
Elfed Roberts