



DESIGN  
COMMISSION  
FOR WALES  
COMISIWN  
DYLUNIO  
CYMRU

# Design Review Report

University of Wales Trinity  
Saint David

**DCFW Ref: N56**

Meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> July 2015



## Declarations of Interest

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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

### CONFIDENTIAL

Meeting date	16 <sup>th</sup> July 2015
Issue date	30 <sup>th</sup> July 2015
Scheme location	UWTSD SA1 Swansea Waterfront
Scheme description	Innovation Quarter
Scheme reference number	56
Planning status	Pre-application

## Declarations of Interest

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The following declarations of interest were made at the beginning of the meeting:  
Cora Kwiatkowski, who was observing the review, works for Stride Treglown.

Steve Smith (Urban Narrative) and Richard Parnaby from the Presentation Team are Design Commission for Wales Panel Members. Steve Smith representing the Local Authority is also a Panel Member. All parties were happy to proceed following the declarations.

## Consultations to Date

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The design team have met with the Commission several times during the development of the masterplan.

The Commission commented by email on the draft Design Code document on 9th July to comply with the timescales of the development of the document.

## The Proposals

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This proposal is for a mixed use development of part of the SA1 site to accommodate the relocation of existing UWTSD academic functions as well as facilitate the delivery of supporting development. This initial phase of development is to be located in the south west of SA1.

A masterplan and design code has been prepared to guide future development.

## Main Points

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Significant progress had been made on the documentation to support the masterplan since the last review. The Commission had the opportunity to review the design code in detail and comment by email in advance of the review and welcomed the opportunity to discuss the code with the design team.

It is understood that a reserved matters application is to be submitted at the end of July to be accompanied by a design and access statement, the design code and environmental and transport statements.

The detailed points outlined in our previous response to the design code were not discussed in detail at the review but still stand. The following main key points formed the basis of discussion:

### **Authority, control and example**

The design team outlined the proposed panel review process for future development phases. This will be a mandatory approval process that all development partners will need to go through before submission of a planning application. The assessment panel will provide advice to the University on the acceptability of the proposed development design. This process is fundamental to the success of the design code as the document allows a large degree of flexibility which will require an assessment of design quality against the aspirations set out.

The design code will have a formal status through a condition on the reserved matters application. Developers will need to submit a response defining how their proposal meets the requirements of the code.

The University will be undertaking the first phase of development which will set the tone for future development. The University development must, therefore, adhere to the masterplan and code and set a high benchmark standard of design quality in both the buildings and public realm.

### **Commercial viability**

The Commission expressed concern regarding the lack of commercial advice to date given the significance that development partners will have in delivering the masterplan. The Investment Prospectus was highlighted by the client team but not looked at in detail. Whilst this outlines the development opportunities there is a need for commercial advice on the non-core elements of the development against which the masterplan can be tested. A clearer understanding of how much development, what it will be and when it might come forward will help the University as it finds its feet in its role as lead developer.

A more detailed phasing plan may be helpful in establishing what will be the catalysts for the commercial development parcels and also what will happen in those spaces in the meantime. A series of plans that illustrate what the development will look like at each of the stages in the timeline that was presented at the review could be one way to do this.

### **Prescription within the code**

With the support of the assessment panel the design code can afford to be flexible on those elements that are to be encouraged rather than required. The code does therefore have a role in being inspirational. However, there are some elements that are prescriptive and these should be more clearly set out as rules in the document. These rules should clearly link to implementation of core design principles. It is important that there is a clear and explicit hierarchy of: principles; leading to rules; which are then expanded further by examples, suggestions and aspirations. The rules should be precise and definitive.

The design code will be a working document that designers, developers and the assessment team will pick up and use. It must be easy to use with all of the information required by a developer in one place. We therefore suggest that the vision and strategic objectives are provided in this document even though they will also be included in the design and access statement.

Some of the key diagrams in the design code document require further clarification to be effective and might work better as a series of separate diagrams. In particular the plan on page 21 of the code needs to more clearly identify the location of active ground floor uses, key frontages, entrances, and movement.

### **Public realm**

Although the character of the public realm across the site will change to suit carrying locations, it still needs a unified overall approach to create a coherent development. Who delivers it and who maintains it is still vague but this will have implications on the design and quality. If the entire public realm is to be maintained by the WG property company, the parameters of this must be understood and the scope of this maintenance should not be allowed to dictate the amount and type of landscaping to the detriment of the quality of the development. Cost and implications for the University of maintenance of landscape and highways (if not adopted) must be understood.

The car parking strategy is critical for the success of the public realm in Peninsular. The proposed park-and-walk arrangement will take the majority of cars out of the streets and spaces within the development and reduce the potential negative impact of integrating parking within each development plot. The requirement to adhere to this arrangement also needs to be clear in the code.

### **Conclusion**

The Commission is encouraged by the progress made on the proposals and the level of consideration that is being given to getting the design right through the design code by the design team. A number of questions remain in relation to commercial viability, the delivery and maintenance of the public realm, and the level of control through the process which must be addressed to ensure that they do not erode the ambition.

The University has a responsibility as stewards of a large amount of land in SA1 to deliver a high quality design for their own core development which will set the tone for further development.

The Design Commission for Wales welcomes the opportunity for further consultation on this important development.

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

## Attendees

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Presentation Team:	Richard Parnaby, UWTSD Steve Smith, Urban Narrative Pierre Wassenaar, Stride Treglown Geraint Flowers, UWTSD
Local Authority:	Steve Smith
Design Review Panel:	
Chair	Ewan Jones
Panel	Mike Gwyther Jones John Punter Jen Heal, Design Advisor, DCFW
Observing:	Cora Kwiatkowski