

Design Review Report

Conwy, Windmill Lane, Llanblethian
Vale of Glamorgan

DCFW Ref: N207

Meeting of 21st November 2019



Review Status

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

Public

21st November 2019
3rd December 2019
Llanblethian, Vale of Glamorgan
Residential Single Dwelling
N207
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

This is the second review by DCFW of the proposals for this site. The project was previously reviewed in August 2019 and this report should be read in conjunction with that of the earlier review.

The Proposals

The client wishes to extend and modernise the existing house, taking advantage of the views to the rear, and to address the series of poorly considered extensions that have been carried out to a c1930s house.

The client wishes to create a contemporary dwelling with additional space in the roof and at the rear. The proposals reviewed in August 2019 were to remove a two-storey front extension and extend to the rear, moving the building further back on the site. This was considered a 'semi-rural' residential site on outskirts of Cowbridge in proximity to existing dwellings either side, opposite and at bottom of garden, on a gently sloping site.

The Design Commission understands that the proposal as it stood in August had not been submitted to the local authority for planning consent. Before doing so and in light of communication with the LPA at the time which resulted in a questioning of the contemporary design approach, the client and design team sought the independent, expert view of the Design Commission. The revised proposals are now the subject of further consultation with the Design Commission and we understand pre-application discussions have also taken place with the local planning authority.

Main Points

The Design Commission welcomes the opportunity to review proposals again at this stage and was, again, pleased to welcome the client along with the design team and local authority representative. Materials provided in advance and a comprehensive presentation also provided a helpful overview of the issues. Based on the materials available and the detailed and well-considered presentation the Design Commission for Wales is supportive of what is now a much refined, improved and high-quality proposal. At the same time the Design Commission is deeply frustrated at what we understand to be the position of the local planning authority. This report is structured in such a way as to address the design approach first and the planning context second.

Design considerations

Overall the client and their architect have responded well to the previous review and the comments made in the Commission's earlier report. The result is a much stronger design solution to the potential of the site and the opportunity afforded by the client's ambition to create a home fit for contemporary life.

The location on the site and its layout is now much stronger than in the previous proposals. The findings of the detailed analysis of height, building line and the irregular accretion that characterises the streetscape have been applied effectively in the fresh design response.

Overall the revised proposals represent a high-quality response to the brief and the site, as well as the local context and streetscape. The Design Commission is fully supportive of this proposal which now more fully realises the potential of the site.

The apparent primary area of concern to the LPA is the roof of the building and the projecting "black" box at the upper level. In the Commission's view there is some scope to significantly minimise the street scene appearance of the roof top element through a minor adjustment in its form. This would not compromise the client's ambition or the integrity of the design approach but would in our opinion address any material issues raised by the LPA.

Planning Context

In our comments in August 2019 the Design Commission stated that...*'In the view of the Design Commission for Wales a contemporary design approach is entirely logical and should present no significant barriers to achieving planning consent. Housing and planning policy at a national and local level support the delivery of homes and promote good design*

and high quality. The key question that follows is whether this particular design, arising from the decision to take a contemporary approach, is the right one.'

The Commission's view has changed only in that it now more strongly supports the proposals and finds it questionable that the indication is that planning consent could still be difficult to achieve. The Commission considers the scheme as proposed is not in conflict with the objectives of Local Development Plan policies MD2 and MD5 for the following reasons. The current proposal:

- is of a high design quality/standard and likely to achieve near zero carbon performance, broader sustainability aims and high energy efficiency.
- is of a scale and massing which is sympathetic with the overall street-scene.
- Responds and contributes positively to its immediate context and that beyond it, which is semi-urban – rather than semi-rural – discernible not only from existing characteristics but also by the proximity of an extant consent for large scale housing development.
- has support from neighbouring property owners and explicit written support from its immediate neighbour.
- does not represent a proposal that could result in demonstrable visual harm to the street-scene or the wider context.
- the proposal has no adverse impacts on residential amenity of neighbouring properties.
- the proposal demonstrates a clear commitment to environmental excellence with a credible low-carbon strategy intrinsic to its design approach.
- The quality of the design will provide a useful benchmark for encouraging design excellence in the proposed 'semi-rural' volume housing scheme proposed for the adjacent site.

More broadly the Design Commission for Wales supports the ambition in Wales to achieve the delivery of more homes, of higher quality. Each and every dwelling contributes to this

ambition, and we very much hope barriers to achieving planning consent for schemes of a quality such as this, can be removed.

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

Attendees

Client/Agent/Developer:	Mr & Mrs Morris
Design Team:	Carolyn Merrifield, Downs Merrifield
Local Planning Authority:	Mark Stringer, Vale of Glamorgan Council
Statutory consultees:	None present
Design Review Panel:	
Chair	Kedrick Davies, Urban Designer, Town Planner
Lead Panellist	Richard Woods, Architect
Panel	Toby Adam, Architect Angela Williams, Architect Carole-Anne Davies, Chief Executive, DCFW