

Design Review Report

Land off Wakehurst Place,
Cardiff

DCFW Ref: N213

Meeting of 21st November 2019



Review Status

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

Public

21st November 2019
28th November 2019
Cardiff
Residential
N213
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.

Consultations to Date

No previous reviews of proposals for this site by DCFW.

The Proposals

The proposal is for 12 semi-detached and detached Council-built houses ranging from two to four bedrooms in the St Mellons area of Cardiff.

Main Points

This site provides the potential to explore the possibilities of applying the aims and ambitions of the Council's housebuilding programme. It is a relatively small site in a good location and the challenge is to not just apply good urban design principles but to identify what will make this a sustainable and delightful place to live.

Analysis, context and options

It was disappointing that the site and context analysis was not provided with the pre-review material as it is fundamental to any scheme. The explanation during the review of the options explored was helpful but prior to this being undertaken it would have been helpful to have a concept plan that identifies what is, or could be, special about the site and what principles are being integrated into the scheme such as desire lines, rather than just identifying constraints.

Placemaking

Currently the proposal is constraints and requirements-led to the detriment of the needs of people and good placemaking. A focus on compliance alone risks achieving only minimum standards and outcomes and can reduce the opportunities to add value through creative, innovative design responses, high quality and therefore long-term public value. Creative solutions need to be explored and tested through the design process. Some opportunities for adding a greater sense of place and residential amenity beyond the curtilage of the dwellings were discussed in the review including:

- The buildings should be used to define usable and significant spaces. There is not much open space available but what is there could be used more effectively. The space at the access point into the site could be more effective if the road was straightened, the houses addressed their gable ends with windows into habitable rooms providing natural surveillance and if the dominance of the road and therefore vehicles was reduced.
- Similarly, the space to the north which accommodates the turning head could be designed more positively to become an asset for the site rather than what could be a maintenance burden.
- Reducing the width of the road should be explored and may result in the potential for more meaningful landscaping.
- The re-en to the north presents a challenge that needs to be addressed through design. An option that integrates the space into the rear gardens of properties could be explored. This could have benefits of creating a larger site area and positively embracing the potential distinctive qualities of the space, but there could also be security and maintenance implications that need to be considered.
- Consideration of whether one of the units could become a three-storey block of flats could benefit the development. It could help to retain the number of units, provide a wider tenant mix and free up space for more meaningful public space.

Boundaries

Boundary treatments onto public areas should be walled to provide appropriate enclosure and security. The boundary between the sloped footpath to the north west corner and the adjacent dwelling requires further work as there are potential overlooking and security issues.

Site sections and street elevations showing the context are important in the evaluation of the proposals. It would also be helpful if the ground-floor plans included the front and back gardens to ensure elements such as bin and bike storage are integrated positively.

Form and materials

The fabric first approach is positive but suggests that external walls are minimised and, therefore, greater use of terraced housing explored. The environmental strategy should be integrated into the proposals at this stage to maximise the potential for passive and active solar gain through orientation. Electric vehicle charging points should also be given early consideration.

The use of brick is appropriate and positive in this location. The form and proportions of the bays, together with the use of the dark coloured bricks results in a heavy and dominant appearance. The massing and form of the bays needs to be refined. Whilst the proposed Ibstock brick provides variety, the potential for this to be achieved through the craft of the bricklayers should be explored.

We urge the team and the client to invest in the design process to find higher quality, creative and more value adding responses that can achieve greater benefits for the council and tenants alike.

Comisiwn Dylunio Cymru Design Commission for Wales is the trading name of DCFW LIMITED, a Private Limited Company established under the Companies Act 1985 and 2006, Company No: 04391072 incorporated in England and

Wales. DCFW is a non-statutory consultee, a private limited company and a wholly owned subsidiary of the Welsh Government. Registered office: 4th Floor, Cambrian Buildings, Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff CF10 5FL T: 029 2045 1964 E connect@dcfw.org. The comment recorded in this report, arising from formal Design Review through our Design Review Service, is provided in the public interest for the consideration of local planning authorities as a material consideration and other users of the Design Review Service. It is not and should not be considered 'advice' and no third party is bound or required to act upon it. The Design Review Service is delivered in line with DCFW's published protocols, code of conduct and complaints procedure, which should be read and considered by users of the service.

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

Attendees

Design Team:	Michael Chichester, C2J Architects Robert Chichester, C2J Architects
Agent/Client/Developer:	Joseph Thomas, Cardiff City Council David Jacques, Cardiff City Council Elise Coalter, Cardiff City Council
Local Planning Authority:	David Davies, Cardiff City Council Mike Biddulph, Cardiff City Council
Design Review Panel:	
Chair	Kedrick Davies
Lead Panellist	Angela Williams
Panel	Jamie Brewster Toby Adam Richard Woods Jen Heal, DCFW