

Design Review Report

Ysbyty Aberteifi, Cardigan

DCFW Ref: N248

Meeting of 18th February 2021



Review Status

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

PUBLIC

18th February 2021
2nd March 2021
Cardigan
Residential, office and community
N248
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 and meeting Agenda items. Any such declarations are recorded here and in DCFW's central records.

None declared.

Note on current operational context:

The Design Commission for Wales is operating during necessary public health measures due to the impact of the Coronavirus Covid 19 pandemic and this report follows the recent online review meeting.

Consultations to Date

This is the first review of the scheme by DCFW.

The Proposals

The proposal consists of demolition of the existing hospital buildings (with the exception of an original John Nash house in part) and construction of new-build apartments for the elderly; a new HQ office for Wales & West Housing (to replace the existing HQ in Newcastle Emlyn) a small maintenance building facility; a new community café (within the restored John Nash house) and 50 car parking spaces.

Main Points

Capitalise on the Opportunity

The site location, setting, proposed mix of uses (including Wales and West Housing's headquarters) and zero carbon ambitions all contribute to the need and opportunity for this to be an exemplary development. We support and encourage the ambition of the project to deliver a sustainable and distinctive addition to the town and the setting of the church. The following identifies key points of focus for the design development.

Landscape and Building Approach

Proposals for the landscape need to be further developed alongside the proposals for the buildings with the landscape plan should inform the layout. The landscape plan needs to address the flooding of the site, integrate SuDS, soften the parking area, enhance the

setting to the east of the proposed development and provide a variety of things to do within the space.

The proposed courtyard provides an appealing setting for the dwellings that surround it but the dwellings to the east and west (Blocks A and C) also need an equally appealing setting which is not yet evident in the proposals. This would help to improve the outlook, setting and amenity space for residents in these dwellings. The transition from public to private/communal space should be addressed.

The entrance to the site also requires further consideration, particularly as it also forms an important element of the entrance to the town from across the bridge. The hierarchy of the design, both architectural and landscape, needs to address this critical condition and its relationship to the town.

The café could have some external seating/events space and the area to the front of the Nash house should be kept clear of cars. Similarly, the relationship between the office atria and the lower landscaped spaces could be enhanced and integrated more with the current paths and the potential future uses of this space.

The landscape of the car park also needs to be addressed to improve its integration into the context, capture opportunities for increasing biodiversity and reducing the visual impact from the river and bridge.

Getting the boundary with the church right is critical for the integration of the scheme into its setting. Clear definition of who is allowed to be in each space needs to be balanced against achieving a sense of openness. Initial considerations to lower the current boundary could be positive and will require close engagement with the church.

Definition of Spaces

The flows of residents, workers in the headquarters and general public through the site requires further mapping to inform the use of and boundaries to the different spaces. To be successful, the café will need to provide an attractive destination from the town with clear routes to it, but the extent of public access must be clear.

Sections through the site are required to further assess the potential and opportunities of the site, the courtyard and the zoning of the building uses and interfaces.

Energy Strategy

The zero carbon ambitions for the scheme should be ambitious and clearly defined. If the aim is to help tackle fuel poverty, consideration should be given to ensuring that the development is truly zero carbon in operation. As part of the strategy, a communal energy supply may be appropriate, with energy then distributed to tenants, as this could help to balance demand. Greater area for PV panels may be required which could influence the roof pitch.

Next Steps

The emerging proposals are addressing the placemaking principles as set out in the Placemaking Wales Charter. These principles should be used as a checking point as the design developments as it has the potential to be a good example.

Sections through the site from the church to the eastern boundary as well as from north to south across the street and showing the space between the proposed building and church are important for understanding the proposed spaces. Views from the entrance are also important.

Consideration of the best approach to the Nash house are ongoing. Restoration to the original form seems to be preferable but the functionality of the building for its future use should be an important guide.

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

Attendees

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Architect/Design Team	Alan Francis, Gaunt Francis Romy Franke, Gaunt Francis Dan Syme, RDS Landscaping Philip Mead, SABA Consulting
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Chair:	Simon Richards
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Design Review Panel:	John Lloyd Angela Williams Neil Williamson Jen Heal, Design Advisor, DCFW Efa Lois, Place Advisor, DCFW