

Design Review Report

Clyne Common, Swansea

DCFW Ref: N216

Meeting of 12th December 2019



Review Status

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

Confidential

12th December 2019
18th December 2019
Swansea
Residential
N216
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 residential development of 58 units, 1-2 storey, 100% affordable housing.

Main Points

Site Suitability

The site is located on Clyne Common, outside of the settlement boundary and is a designated SINC. It is being taken forward as an exception site under LDP policy H6 as it is proposed to be 100% affordable housing. There is a significant unfulfilled demand for affordable housing in this area and this was presented as one of very few sites in the area for residential development. This justification needs to be clearly presented with further narrative and evidence to support the case for the proposals on the site and the opportunity that exists in this area.

Whilst the criteria of Policy H6 may be addressed to enable the development of the site, the Commission is concerned that, as currently drafted, this small, incremental addition to the settlement does not create the most appropriate urban form, does not relate well to the settlement nor would it deliver the greatest public benefit to the community. Consideration, led by the LPA in collaboration with Coastal Housing (and other RSLs if appropriate), should be given to whether there

is a more cohesive, coordinated and proactive approach to addressing housing need and opportunity in this area. Taking a long-term view of this edge of the settlement through a comprehensive masterplan would help to address some of the concerns of this relatively small appendage to the settlement which appears somewhat illogical as presently proposed. However, concerns were rightly raised about the challenges that a large development of 100% affordable housing would raise in relation to creating a cohesive community. This consideration also suggests that a more comprehensive approach would help better align with the goals and ways of working of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and assist and more comprehensive approach to the opportunity.

Although the site is a SINC and the proposed housing directly abuts an area of Ancient Woodland, the ecological impacts may be capable of being adequately addressed through positive management. An area of exchange common land is proposed to compensate for the loss resulting from the development, and it is understood that a letter of support for this approach has been received from the Gower Commoners Association, although the letter was not provided in materials available to the Commission. In relation to the proposed land swap, the recreation and open access value of the common land parcels will need to be weighed up as part of the required public interest test in determining the approach to the future use of the land.

Consideration should be given to how this site might connect into potential further development land and it should be ensured that it is properly stitched into the existing settlement. The network of streets, spaces and footpaths need to reinforce this as a logical extension to the settlement.

Environmental Sustainability

The ambitions for the approach to energy and environmental sustainability have not yet been set out sufficiently clearly. Building on Coastal Housing's growing experience through the IHP programme of energy and carbon reduction approaches we would expect this scheme to go beyond minimum Building Regulations, particularly in terms of reducing running costs for residents.

Placemaking

A logical approach has been taken that seeks to ensure that properties are outward facing in the proposed layout, however this creates some challenging arrangements of fronts and backs and rear gardens onto the street. Further consideration should be given to how these spaces will work to ensure that they are safe, well overlooked and welcoming as they are likely to be the approach that many people make to their homes. If people are likely to come into the back of their properties from the road, this should be positively designed into the properties, boundaries, garden design and layout and consideration given to how to ensure natural surveillance. This should also be reviewed in relation to the

opportunity that exists in this area through a more comprehensive phased masterplan.

The parking numbers and layout should be reviewed as large parts of the site are given over to parking and the spaces are often disconnected from the properties. The site is located close to bus stops and other measures such as a car-pool and bike hire could also be considered to incentivise the move away from high levels of car-use/ownership. Banks of nine car parking spaces should certainly be avoided.

If the need for parking spaces is reduced there may be potential to accommodate more terraced houses which would increase the density of the development and improve thermal efficiency. This would be most appropriate to the south of the site.

Next Steps

We would welcome the return of the scheme for a further review but DCFW time could be more constructively used if this is extended to include consideration of the wider area, if this is to be pursued with the Local Authority.

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

Attendees

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Design Review Panel:
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Lead Panellist Neil Williamson
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John Lloyd
Carole-Anne Davies, DCFW
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Observing Diana Infante Vargas, Cardiff University