

Design Review Report

Victoria Mews, Jack's Lane, Penarth

DCFW Ref: N269

Meeting of 11th November 2021



Review Status

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

PUBLIC

11th November 2021
18th November 2021
Penarth, Vale of Glamorgan
Residential
N269
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 recorded.

Consultations to Date

This is the first consultation with the Design Commission for Wales and we are aware of the note the planning history.

The Proposals

This proposal is for a mews development of three dwellings on land at the rear of 21 Victoria Road, Penarth CF64 3EG and 2 Victoria Square Penarth CF64 3EH accessed off a rear lane, known colloquially as 'Jack's Lane'. The scheme proposes replacing a series of dilapidated redundant garages in an urban setting. The forms convey the imagined history of the lanes; and the romantic idea of converted brick workshops and coach-houses. The design materials state that 'the form comprises a series of pitched and mono pitched structures that play on the history of courtyards and coach houses'. Each of the dwellings have front courtyards, two have single storey utility wings and two storey elements set back off the lane. All dwellings have rear gardens screened from the rear gardens of the houses they back onto by existing mature trees, boundary walls and fences. The site is within the Penarth Town Centre settlement boundary near public transport and local amenities. Previous iterations of the proposals were subject to a planning appeal and have subsequently been revised. The current proposal is at pre-application stage.

Main Points

Analysis, design approach and quality

The site is located within a conservation area which is currently in a state of considerable disrepair and dilapidation, attracting anti-social behaviour, fly-tipping and graffiti

diminishing the sense of safety and use of the lane as a convenient pedestrian connection. The area no longer comprises the uses associated with its conservation area status and is currently an unpleasant space.

As a site in a conservation area, it requires thorough site and context analysis to inform design decisions and achieve high design quality. The site and context analysis demonstrated in the design materials provided is thorough, and the resulting scheme is a well-considered carefully designed intervention, of appropriate scale in the locality. The proposal has been designed so as not to detract from the existing context, which results in a well-integrated, highly resolved scheme. The proposals demonstrate clear technical responses to planning policy and context including conventions.

The proposals constitute the provision of three new homes appropriate to smaller families and sufficiently well-design to accommodate good space standards for live/work flexibility. Careful consideration is demonstrated in the design materials regarding consideration of neighbouring properties, views, and mature vegetation.

Placemaking

This scheme responds positively to the principles of placemaking and the national Placemaking Wales Charter and guide which the Vale of Glamorgan has been active in promoting. <http://dcfw.org/placemaking/placemaking-charter>

Materiality

Some treatments currently include materials sympathetic to and reflective of the former uses of the area, including oxidising steel. Consideration might be given to a material in the first few years to allow swift cleaning and repair.

Lighting

In this location harsh street lighting allows for the benefits of borrowed light. Consultation with neighbouring residents also revealed concerns about intrusive light impacts and the proposed low level borrowed light rationale is appropriate.

Refuse collection and management

The site is 30m from the road, and the design team recognise the need to make provision for waste collection and associated cleaning. The client stated that they are willing to accept a planning condition committing them to private refuse collection arrangements. It is also understood that there have been no objections or concerns raised by the highway department in relation to the proposals. The client is also willing to enable local custodianship which has been considered in consultation with neighbouring residents.

Conservation and precedent

There appears to be a tension between the conservation status afforded this location and the potential for positive change which enable enhancement. The area is not one which has high value heritage assets and the main concerns expressed by the local authority were 'character' and 'precedent'.

The need to positively manage change is a core part of working the built environment in the interests of quality, the need for a range of smaller scale dwellings and to increase opportunity for sustainability in development. Change in this area has not been curated or shaped by purposeful intervention with any distinct character or identity and has resulted in an increasingly dilapidated state the dominant characteristic of which is now disrepair and absence of active use. A concern was also expressed that this development could set a precedent which would serve to undermine the local authority's role in the future determination of similar schemes.

The Commission urges objective consideration of the implications associated with these expressed concerns as to 'character' and 'precedent'. The first is that the already loosely defined 'character' of this area has constantly evolved and neither the garages themselves nor their use are original to the development. The area status documentation is more than a decade out of date. The quality and character of this area is now significantly diminished and vulnerable to further deterioration. This proposal addresses that deterioration and makes a positive contribution informed by sound analysis. It offers the opportunity for new homes and the avoidance of future considerable difficulties in terms of the site attractiveness to future active use and/or high-quality residential development.

The Commission considers the risk that this proposal sets a precedent for very well-considered, well-designed, residential developments which comply with planning policy whilst also addressing technical considerations, is one that should be embraced. Every such scheme would be objectively assessed on its merits, by the local authority, for its ability to demonstrate the sound analysis, technical and policy response and high-quality architectural design resolution on a compact site that are evident in this potentially exemplary proposal.

The Design Commission is fully supportive of this proposal.

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

Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer:	Chris Loyn
Architect/Design Team:	Jacqui Walmsley - Studio Walmsley Architects
Local Authority:	Peter Thomas – Vale of Glamorgan Council Shafqut Zahoor - Vale of Glamorgan Council
Chair:	Andrew Linfoot
Design Review Panel:	Mike Gwyther-Jones – Lead Panellist Steven Smith Martin Knight Angela Williams Neil Williamson Jen Heal - Design Advisor, DCFW Efa Lois - Place Advisor, DCFW
Observing:	Carole-Anne Davies - Chief Executive, DCFW Guest
Observers:	Clare Wilding – new panellist