



DESIGN  
COMMISSION  
FOR WALES  
COMISIWN  
DYLUNIO  
CYMRU

# Design Review Report

Plot D5b, SA1, Swansea

**DCFW Ref: 282**

Meeting of 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2022



**Review Status**

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

**PUBLIC**

3<sup>rd</sup> August 2022  
15th August 2022  
Residential  
Swansea  
N282  
Post-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.

Mark Hallett was initially asked to be a panel member for this scheme, but he declared that he is on the Board of Pobl, so he was not a member of the panel for the Swansea Design Review Day.

Steve Smith, of Swansea Council, declared that he is a Design Review Panel member.

Carole-Anne Davies declared a commercial relationship with GJP, outside of her work with DCFW.

All were happy to proceed.

## Consultations to Date

---

No public consultation has been undertaken on this reserved matters application.

## The Proposals

---

The proposals are a Reserved Matters application for a plot located on a rectangular parcel of land situated on the waterfront within SA1 – a major regeneration initiative in the Swansea docks area. The site is approximately 0.3 hectares in size, and will provide 43 affordable dwellings, comprising of 35 apartments and 8 townhouses, with landscaping and associated works.

The development will be 100% social rent, and the development will also comply with Pobl's Net Zero Carbon Plan which goes beyond WDQR in terms of addressing fuel poverty and carbon reduction.

## Main Points

---

The panel appreciated the clearly communicated nature of the presentation.

### **Interface of buildings with outdoor space**

The proposals would benefit from contextual studies of the successful high level terraces and elevated terraced frontages of the houses also facing the waterfront of SA1, and how their successes could be replicated on this scheme.

The proposals would benefit from a better social link with the parkland, and the developer clarified that they seek to work with the LPA to mesh their proposals with the park. The interface between the buildings and the park is key.

### **Links to amenity space**

The circulation zone would benefit from the further development of a garden area. The common areas would benefit from the inclusion of dwell spaces and window seats.

The spatial relationship between semi-public and private space could be explored further. This testing should focus on what people are likely to do in each space, and if the spaces are suitable. It is also worth exploring how children would safely access the park from the townhouses, as well as the apartments.

### **Layout**

The client and design team stated their desire to develop a strong façade to frame the park, but this requires further design exploration. The concept of breaking down the monolithic character of the buildings is strong; however, it requires further design development, particularly the main elevation, and the corner design.

### **Waterfront views**

It is of key importance that any dwellings have views to the water where possible, as this helps to locate the scheme in its waterfront location.

### **Overheating and Ventilation**

It is important that dwellings are dual aspect where possible in the scheme, and that there are windows on the maximum number of elevations, in order to aid with future overheating. Maximising floor to ceiling heights will also help with resilience when it comes to future overheating, and it is of key importance that floor to ceiling heights are not sacrificed in this development for MVHR ducting.

## **House Types and Layouts**

The client and design team discussed the potential for separate kitchen and dining rooms, as the current layout was perceived to be too tight.

The proposals would benefit from the exploration of whether the elevations can communicate what is housing, and what is circulation, particularly facing the courtyard.

## **Parking and the Courtyard**

The courtyard would benefit from further design exploration, as it would benefit from being greener. The client and design team stated the potential for on-street parking on Langdon Road, which would alleviate some of the parking issues regarding provision on site. The panel would encourage the design team to look at car clubs and other strategies for reducing car use on site.

The courtyard would benefit from becoming a space that can support communities, such as a community garden, which would provide communal space that is less public than the park, but more social than the balconies.

It is important that the design of the courtyard is explored at a human scale, through sketches and CGIs, and that these explorations also consider views from the balconies of the adjacent building.

The addition of greenery to the lower levels of the building was discussed in order to add visual interest, as well as the inclusion of well-designed bin and cycle storage, in order to improve views for those looking out on to the courtyard. It is of key importance that the courtyard is overlooked and well-designed, and it would benefit from being linked to the waterfront edge. This could be possible with the removal of some of the parking spaces. It is also important that any SUDS strategy on site explores how SUDS can become active spaces, as well as drainage. The client clarified that they will be maintaining the SUDS and site edges.

## **Energy Strategy**

The individual or shared nature of the heat strategy will affect the layouts of the building, as well as individual dwellings. The client stated that they are currently looking at a communal heat pump and heat recovery ventilation system in order to reduce capital and maintenance cost, however, they clarified that they will need to test the M&E

strategy. The client also stated that the strategy used on these buildings could become a blueprint for Pobl going forward.

The panel encouraged the client to focus on the level of detail of the energy strategy at this point of the design process, rather than during the contractual phase, and to be careful of the design gap, particularly regarding airtightness, and consider impacts on internal layouts and elevations.

### **Retaining quality through to delivery**

It is of key importance that this development has long-term public value, and the panel would encourage the design team to look at sophisticated contract selection matrixes in order to maximise design quality when appointing contractors.

### **Next Steps**

The Commission would welcome further engagement on this scheme.

---

**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 as a wholly owned subsidiary of the Welsh Government. Registered office: 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Cambrian Buildings, Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff CF10 5FL T: 029 2045 1964 E [connect@dcfw.org](mailto: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

---

Agent/Client/Developer:

Mark Trounce, Pobl  
Amy Prince, Pobl  
Daniel Lloyd, Pobl

Architect/Design Team:

Rob Wheeton, Stride Treglown  
Luke Grattarola, Geraint John Planning  
Laura Power, Geraint John Planning

Local Authority:

Steve Smith, Swansea Council  
David Owen, Swansea Council  
Jeff Saywell, Swansea Council

### **DCFW Design Review Panel**

Chair:

Wendy Maden

Lead Panellist:

Richard Woods

Panel:

Lynne Sullivan  
Jen Heal, DCFW, Design Advisor  
Efa Lois, DCFW, Place Advisor  
Carole-Anne Davies, DCFW, Chief-Executive

Observing:

Hayley Kemp, Swansea Council  
Marco Mancini, Swansea Council  
Alys Smith, A-Level Work Experience Student