



DESIGN
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Design Review Report

Rhyd Angharad Barns,

Rhydwyn, Anglesey

21st January 2014



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.

Review Status

CONFIDENTIAL

Meeting date	21 st January 2014
Issue date	5 th February 2014
Scheme location	Rhydwyn, Anglesey
Scheme description	Conversion and extension of barns
Scheme reference number	32
Planning status	Permission refused September 2013

Declarations of Interest

None declared.

Consultations to Date

The Proposals

This scheme proposes to convert two derelict agricultural barns, and extend them with an earth-sheltered structure built into an existing hollow in the ground formed by historic quarrying on the site to create a two-bedroom dwelling. An application for planning consent for this proposal was refused by the Local Planning Authority in September 2013. The applicant is considering appealing the decision, and has asked the Design Commission to comment on the designs.

We understand that an earlier application for conversion to residential use was approved in July 2010, so the principle of residential use is established. It is the proposed extension that is at issue. In the Decision Notice confirming refusal of the planning application, the planning authority states that it '*considers that the proposal does not respect the character, scale and setting of the existing building due to the amount of extension proposed and therefore does not accord with various planning policies*'. In the officer's report that accompanies the decision notice, it also considers that '*the design of the proposal is of high quality and it is not considered that the proposal would harm the sensitive landscape*'.

The following clauses in the Isle of Anglesey's design guide for Conversions in Rural Areas contained in Supplementary Planning Guidance are referred to:

"a) *Any inherent characteristics of merit in the building are retained and any features of historical or architectural interest are safeguarded.*

b) *The conversion scheme respects the character, scale and setting of the existing building, and involves only minor external alterations, unless it can be demonstrated that significant enhancement of the appearance of the building will be secured.*"

There seems to have been only one objection recorded in the planning officer's report – from a local Councillor who thought that the proposal would have an impact on the landscape when seen from Rhydwyn.

The site is within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Summary

- The principle of an earth-sheltered extension which respects the traditional barns by being subservient is a valid approach in the context of the policy framework.
- Any further materials that may be submitted to the planning authority should clearly and logically illustrate how the design responds to planning policy and guidance.
- The client may wish to employ a specialist Planning Consultant.

Main Points in Detail

Design Approach

There are many successful developments which involve contemporary extensions to traditional buildings or contemporary dwellings in countryside settings. The Design Commission supports this approach in principle, provided individual schemes are well-designed and detailed.

The Local Authority's design guidance for conversions in rural areas requires that, *'The conversion scheme respects the character, scale and setting of the existing building...'* The idea of 'respect', in this case, could be interpreted in a number of ways: An extension could respect the original building by being like it in terms of form, scale or materials; or by keeping the original building as intact as possible; or by being subservient to it. Each of these responses, in principle, is equally valid.

In this case, the extension is subservient to the traditional barns by being built into the hillside, and earth-sheltered, which reduces its visual impact. This is an appropriate approach, providing the applicant and designer are satisfied that the arrangement of internal spaces is efficient and not compromised by being semi-underground.

Presentation and Communication

Effective presentation and communication of a design is important, as it gives the planning authority and lay people confidence that they have properly understood the proposals. Any further material submitted to the planning authority should clearly illustrate how the design responds to planning policy and guidance. This should include a good Design and Access Statement.

The Design Commission's publication, 'Design and Access Statements in Wales', which is available on our website (dcfw.org), provides useful guidance.

Materials which communicate the scheme effectively might include the following:

- A physical and/or computer generated model which accurately shows how the proposal sits in the topography of the site, and relates to existing and reformed ground levels.
- Accurate photo-montage views of the proposals from surrounding view points
- Photo examples of the proposed materials
- Examples of similar architectural approaches which have been successful
- Key construction details which demonstrate how the important junctions will appear

Planning Advice

The Design Commission cannot advise whether the applicant should appeal the refusal or submit a new application. This is for them to decide.

The applicant may wish to employ the services of a Planning Consultant who can provide expert advice on the situation.

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

Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer:

Architectural/Urban Designer: Maredudd ab Iestyn
Planning Authority:

Design Review Panel:

Chair	Richard Parnaby
Lead Panellist	Angela Williams
	Michael Griffiths
	Amanda Spence, Design Advisor, DCFW