



DESIGN
COMMISSION
FOR WALES
COMISIWN
DYLUNIO
CYMRU

Design Review Report

Land west of Llangyfelach Road,
Swansea

DCFW Ref: N110

Meeting of 19th May 2016



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

PUBLIC

Meeting date	19 th May 2016
Issue date	2 nd June 2016
Scheme location	Llangyfelach Road, Swansea
Scheme description	Residential Development
Scheme reference number	N110
Planning status	Pre-application

Declarations of Interest

None.

Consultations to Date

This is the first time that the Design Commission for Wales has reviewed proposals for this site. It is one of a number of strategic sites in Swansea that have been reviewed by the Design Commission.

The Proposals

The Greenfield site of approximately 114 hectares is located to the north west of Swansea City Centre. Land within the site is predominantly under pasture with some woodland and established hedgerows.

Approximately 1,800 residential units are proposed for the site with a district centre to include shops, a pub and a primary school. The site will be divided into development parcels some of which will be delivered by different developers.

An outline planning application is to be submitted for the whole site.

Main Points

The scale of this strategic site is particularly significant and the decisions made at this strategic stage are important for the success of the development. It is therefore a good stage for review and we welcomed the consultation on this site.

It is clear that there has been positive dialogue between the developer/design team and the local planning authority which is important on such as significant scheme. We encourage this dialogue to continue as the proposals for the site progress.

There are a number of crucial decisions that the local authority need to make so that a robust masterplan can be completed. This includes the potential requirement for, and location of, a link road to connect the development to the A48 and requirements for the school.

Understanding the scale and nature of the development

It was very helpful to understand the scale of the proposed development as comparable to a town such as Usk but the nature of the development and how it will grow and develop over time also needs to be understood. The commercial reality of what can be achieved here will be a fundamental part of that understanding. It is positive that the idea of some mix of uses is being discussed as this is important for establishing a sense of community and vitality within the area.

The decision to not include any employment use on the site so as to reinforce the city centre as the location for employment uses is understood. However, options for other uses that might help to support a mixed use core for the development and create a greater sense of community and activity, particularly during the day, should be considered. This may include a community centre, a care facility, nursery or smaller specialist shops.

Increasing the density of residential development within the district centre and including flats over shops would help to support the centre and provide a wider residential mix that will support a diverse community. All of these elements should help to define the nature and location of the district centre. Currently, the nature and location of the district centre were not yet fully convincing. Scope for the centre to grow in the future is important and this consideration will need to be built into the strategic masterplan.

Strategic masterplan

Getting the strategic/visioning principles in place is crucial at this stage but for some aspects this may require further detail to check that the strategic approach is right. For example, how the parcels of development relate to the spine road and how the nature of this relationship may change along the length of the route. Ensuring design integrity to development on both sides of roads is also desirable and land disposals should be organised to achieve this. It will be particularly important if land on either side of the spine road is to be built out by different developers. It is important that there is a strong sense of cohesion across the site as a whole but particularly along this route.

Further studies at this stage could include further information on design principles for the core, key frontages, development fringes and key public spaces.

Character areas should also be outlined at this stage.

Sub-area masterplans

It is important to create "time for design" to enable all parties to engage productively in an evolutionary process. The mechanism for delivering design quality and consistency is particularly important given the size of this site and the fact different parcels will be

developed by a range of house builders. At this outline stage the strategic masterplan is the most important element and it is beginning to shape up well, but further clarification of visions for the key routes, spaces and edges of the site is required. To manage reserved matters applications for each phase of development we recommended that sub-area masterplans are prepared before reserved matters applications. The Sub-area masterplans can be tied into a S106 agreement that requires them to be prepared, submitted and approved prior to a reserved matters application being submitted. The section 106 agreement could also initiate regular design team and developer workshops to facilitate the build up of detail associated with the sub area masterplans. The sub area masterplans should be at a scale (1:500) and supported by design codes for key character areas.

Establishing and pinning down development principles and design quality is important for everyone; Lanmore homes will benefit from the certainty that other developers will be working towards the same quality standards as they will. In addition, such information will be useful in marketing the site and assisting potential purchasers.

Connections

The location of the spine road should be checked by working up parcels either side in principle to ensure that they can be broken down into blocks with an efficient geometry. The decision to not connect the development parcels for vehicles other than via the spine road will need to be well justified with a clear understanding of how people will move through and about the site, otherwise the development will end up as a series of insular housing estates rather than a well-connected cohesive development/small town which relates back to the examples of a small town shown at the beginning such as Usk.

A diagram showing anticipated desire lines from residential areas to bus stops, the district centre and facilities in the surrounding area will support the development of the foot and cycle path network. Additional bus stops should be considered where the site is steeper to allow accessibility for all. Although the site is not steep in development terms (1:17), the slope would require a ramp under Building Regulations.

Movement to and from the school also needs to be clearly understood, particularly if traffic will be coming from the existing settlement into the development for drop-off and pick-up and generating additional trips. In general the development needs to be stitched in to the existing network of routes to provide adequate connections.

Open space

It is positive that a variety of open spaces are being built into the development proposals and these should be safeguarded at the strategic stage as they provide a strong element of the character of the site. The parking requirements for larger sporting facilities should not be overlooked.

The extent of landscape and open space in the masterplan is welcome but brings the challenge of long term management and a significant ongoing cost. This is so crucial for the success of the scheme that the principles and extents of responsibility for future landscape management must be determined now, whether it is through local authority adoption or a service charge on each property.

Allow for innovation

Early consideration should be given to the orientation of properties and the potential for solar gain which would support the inclusion of alternative house types such as Passivhaus. Consideration should also be given to whether there is scope to include plots for self-build and live-work units.

SINC

Concern was raised regarding the proposed development of the district centre on land identified as a SINC. It was explained that, rather than trying to keep this area as an island within the middle of the development, the ecological value of the site would be improved elsewhere to compensate for the loss of this land. This has been discussed with NRW.

Hedgerows

The site currently accommodates a significant number of hedgerows, many of which will be lost with the proposed development. These hedgerows are prominent on site and add to the character of the existing fields which are broken down into a quite small scale pattern. The proposed masterplan currently only shows the large strategic green corridors. Whilst it may not be practical to retain all of the hedgerows in order to create viable development plots, their retention could be prioritised in some areas over others, especially where the existing hedgerows are of good quality. This could help to add character to different development parcels and make them more distinctive. The analysis and decision making process needs to be explained to support this. Hedgerows should be retained in the area marked for public open space.

Building for Life 12

Building for Life (BfL) 12 Wales is now available on the DCFW website <http://dcfw.org/building-for-life-12-wales/>. It has been endorsed by Welsh Government and DCFW and has been adapted to fit with the Welsh planning policy context. Considering how the objectives of BfL 12 Wales can be met at this early strategic stage will enable each of the development parcels the opportunity of achieving Built for Life accreditation.

Next steps

Due to the scale of the site and the long development timeframe we would like to see proposals for the site at a future stage. If a design framework or code is proposed there would be value in a review of the document and process.

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. DCFW is a non-statutory consultee, a private limited company and a wholly owned subsidiary of the Welsh Government. Registered office: 4th Floor, Cambrian Buildings, Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff CF10 5FL T: 029 2045 1964 E 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

Architect:	Chris Waterworth, Chris Waterworth Architects
Landscape Architect:	Dai Lewis, EDP
Planning Consultant:	Geraint John, Geraint John Planning
Developer:	Simon Grey, Lanmore Homes Christine Sullivan, SLP/Lanmore Homes
Local Planning Authority:	Tom Evans, Steve Smith, Andrew Ferguson City and County of Swansea
Design Review Panel:	
Chair	Ewan Jones
Lead Panellist	Cora Kwiatkowski
Panel	Kedrick Davies Alister Kratt Andrew Linfoot Amanda Spence, Design Advisor, DCFW Jen Heal, Design Advisor, DCFW