

Design Review Report

Swansea Central (St David's),
Swansea

DCFW Ref: N119

Meeting of 10th May 2018



Review Status

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

PUBLIC

10th May 2018
May 2018
Swansea
Mixed Use
N119
Pre-application

Declarations of Interest

Steve Smith attended this meeting in his capacity as Urban Design and Conservation Officer of Swansea Council, however he is also a panel member of DCFW Design Review.

Wendy Maden attended this meeting as a Design Review Panel member, part of her role with DCFW. She is also undertaking a review of the Kingsway area within the Swansea Central Area Regeneration Framework on behalf of Swansea Council, in a consultant role with The Urbanists.

Consultations to Date

DCFW was consulted during the development of the Swansea City Centre Strategic Framework. Proposals for this site were reviewed by the Commission in October 2016 and January 2017, in advance of their outline planning submission.

Public and stakeholder consultation has been undertaken by the local authority.

The Proposals

Redevelopment of the former St David's site and land to the south of Oystermouth Road. The proposed development includes a hotel, arena, park and mix of new retail, restaurants, with residential accommodation on upper storeys and accompanying public realm works.

Outline planning consent was gained in March 2017 and the proposals presented are in preparation of a Reserved Matters application due to be submitted in June 2018.

Main Points in Detail

The Design Commission welcomed the return of this scheme to design review and the opportunity to comment on the proposals for the Reserved Matters application. The proposals show significant ambition for the site and DCFW supports this aspiration.

A significant amount of work has clearly been undertaken since both the last review and Outline Planning submission. This work addresses some of the concerns raised in the previous design review.

This report should be read in conjunction with the reports from the previous two reviews. It will not repeat the points raised previously, rather it focuses on the main points that emerged from this review, which should be considered in the development of the submission for the reserved matters application.

The following details the main points arising from the review;

Contextual analysis

Previous reviews have indicated that the proposals have been well informed by context, local materials and consultation, however this was less evident in the material presented at this review. Material presented for the Reserved Matters application should clearly demonstrate how the design and materiality have been informed by contextual analysis.

Accessibility

Accessibility is of the utmost importance to this scheme given the complex levels associated with the bridge over Oystermouth Road and the park platform. The scheme should be fully inclusive and accessible routes and facilities should be located as close as possible to less accessible routes so as not inconvenience any users.

Environmental Strategy

A sound environmental strategy should underpin the design of the buildings, however there was little demonstration of how an environmental strategy has informed the design so far. This strategy and resulting relationship with the design proposals should be clear within the material submitted for the Reserved Matters application.

Mixed use block

DCFW encourage the diverse mix of uses proposed for the block south of Oystermouth road. A mix of car parking, residential and other ground floor uses will help to activate the block throughout the day and create a sense of place. However, the architectural approach at present is unconvincing and lacks supporting design narrative.

Bridge

The bridge design currently lacks architectural quality and it appears that the finer details and use of materials are unresolved. High quality form and materiality must be delivered to ensure this bridge positively contributes to the immediate surroundings and the rest of the city.

Arena

Given that the roof of the arena will be highly visible from upper floors of the adjacent hotel, the treatment of it should be fully considered and better refined.

Park

DCFW supports the aspiration and creative proposals for the civic park. The strong concept and aspiration should be protected throughout the design and delivery process. Future management and maintenance of the park should be considered from the outset to ensure longevity of this high quality.

Podium edges

The edges of the podium should be well considered to ensure that pedestrian experience at the lower ground floor level, around the hotel and along Oystermouth Road, is not compromised. Treatment of this edge should be of a high quality and endeavour to improve the pedestrian and vehicular experience at this lower level.

Deliverability

The design team and client team should endeavour to ensure that the delivery process does not dilute the ambitious design. The key design concepts for the arena and park should be protected to ensure that quality is not value engineered out of the schemes. The success of the design presented is to a large degree based on the consistency of approach by a single design team. A means of continuing this consistency throughout the design is encouraged in order to safeguard quality.

Arts engagement

Consideration should be given to developing an arts engagement strategy which takes full advantage of the many opportunities for arts throughout construction and post completion. The phased approach to development offers many opportunities for temporary and meanwhile interventions. Likewise, the outdoor performance spaces adjacent to the arena provide opportunities to create a year round cultural calendar to serve local people.

Further review

This was the last opportunity to review the scheme before the submission of Reserved Matters application in June 2018. However, we would encourage the client team to engage with DCFW on future phases of the Swansea Central development.

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

Attendees

Architects: Friedrich Ludewig, ACME
Glenn Moorley, ACME

Landscape Architect:	Allan Cox, Capita
Development Advisor:	Spencer Winter, Rivington Land
Planning Consultant:	Laura Fletcher-Cray, Savills
Project Manager:	Nick Oliver, Padstone
Local Authority:	Huw Mowbry David Owen Katy Evans Steve Smith
Design Review Panel:	
Chair	Jamie Brewster
Lead Panellist	Michael Gwyther-Jones
Panel	Richard Woods Jen Heal, Design Advisor, DCFW Amanda Spence, Design Advisor, DCFW Wendy Maden, DCFW
Observing:	Rhian Haf, Glass Artist