

# Design Review Report

Mumbles Hill House, Swansea

**DCFW Ref: N178**

Meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> October 2018



## Review Status

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

## PUBLIC

11<sup>th</sup> October 2018  
22<sup>nd</sup> October 2018  
Swansea  
Residential  
N178  
Pre-application

## Declarations of Interest

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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.

## Consultations to Date

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Pre-application consultation has been undertaken with the local planning authority between April and June 2018.

## The Proposals

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The proposed development comprises a six bedroom family home with triple garage and granny annexe incorporating swimming pool, library and observatory.

The accommodation is arranged over three floors, though is nestled into the slope of the hill giving the appearance of a two storey dwelling. The building replaces a large dwelling with outbuildings and garage and whilst comparable in size, its position on the site, manipulation of topography and utilisation of the roof space aims to reduce the visual impact of the new building.

The proposals utilise materials including render, stone and natural slate with hardwood windows in line with the Gower AONB Design Guide.

## Main Points

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DCFW supports the aspiration to deliver a high quality, replacement dwelling on this sensitive hilltop site. However, further design development is needed to fully achieve this vision and the following points summarise key issues from the review that should be considered in further design development:

### Visibility

There was general consensus over the visibility of the proposed building in the landscape in that it was generally screened from a number of directions but open in the view from the south, and that the building sat within a larger scale landscape. It was recognised that there are a number of policies which need to be complied with, but importantly the building needs to be seen as one of high design quality in this exposed location.

## **Design Brief**

The layout of the proposed dwelling appears to have been developed closely with the developer and his family and responds to the brief which is determined by how this multi-generational family intend to live in it. The resulting form is a very large family house which, although it remains within the scale of the existing house, could be developed further to break down some of the mass to create a more elegant form. Consideration could be given to futureproofing of the scheme. Given that there are no bedrooms on the ground floor, the design could include a knock-out panel for future lift provision, for example.

## **Form & massing**

The current articulation of the brief into the massing has led to a bulky structure with no clear hierarchy of form. The design team should explore opportunities to better articulate the form and create a hierarchy in the form in line with the internal uses, which may resolve the bulk of the building and offer greater flexibility in use to respond to changing circumstances.

Exploration and testing of different hierarchies of roof lines of the four distinct elements of the mass could help to sit the building more comfortably into the site. Articulating a distinction in the roof lines for the four separate elements is likely to make the building seem less bulky.

## **Elevations**

The façade and large central fenestration of the elevation at arrival to the building feels over-complicated and un-domestic in scale and appearance. It could be reconsidered to simplify the façade and make it feel more residential in nature. The revised proposal which broke down the elevations with different materials is welcomed.

## **Fenestration**

The fenestration pattern has clearly been informed by the brief to maximise views from the site. However, this aspiration should be balanced with the need for temperature comfort inside the dwelling. Modelling should be undertaken to ensure that the internal spaces of the dwellings will be comfortable all year round.

## **Observatory**

An observatory was included in the design brief to allow the developer to enjoy their hobby in astronomy and make the most of the lack of light pollution in this area. However, the siting of the observatory within the roofline and adjacent to a roof terrace currently feels unresolved. The conical observatory punches through the sloped roof which creates awkward detailing and causes further complexity in the bulky form.

## **Next steps**

Further drawings may be helpfully submitted with the planning application to aid understanding of the design rationale. These may include; sketches testing different hierarchy of form and rooflines, and site sections demonstrating how the building anchors into the site. This should explore and test the use of materials and arrangement in terms of the design solution being positively traditional or contemporary.

The Commission would welcome further opportunity to review the scheme with the aim of improving design quality through constructive dialogue.

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

## Attendees

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Agent/Client/Developer:	Dr Parvaiz Ali
Design Team:	Kevin Matthews, Huw Griffiths Architects
Local Planning Authority:	Stuart Hayes & Iestyn Jenkins, City & County of Swansea
Design Review Panel:	
Chair	Cora Kwiatkowski
Lead Panellist	Andrew Linfoot Simon Power Jonathan Vernon-Smith Wendy Maden, Design Advisor, DCFW