

Design Review Report

Conwy, Windmill Lane, Llanblethian
Vale of Glamorgan

DCFW Ref: N207

Meeting of 15th August 2019



Review Status

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

Public

15th August 2019
16th August 2019
Llanblethian, Vale of Glamorgan
Residential Single Dwelling
N207
Pre-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 Agenda items. Any such declarations are recorded here and in DCFW's central records.

None declared.

Consultations to Date

This is the first review by DCFW of the proposals for this site.

The Proposals

The client wishes to extend and modernise the existing house, taking advantage of the views to the rear, and to address the series of poorly considered extensions that have been carried out to c1930s house. The client wishes to strip back to the original cottage and create a contemporary dwelling with additional space in the roof and at the rear. The proposals remove a two-storey front extension and extend to the rear, moving the building further back on the site. This is semi-rural residential site on outskirts of Cowbridge in proximity to existing dwellings either side, opposite and at bottom of garden, on a gently sloping site. The Design Commission understands that the current proposal has not yet been submitted to the local authority for planning consent. Before doing so and in light of communication with the LPA which have resulted in a questioning of the contemporary design approach, the client and design team are seeking the independent view of the Design Commission.

Main Points

The Design Commission welcomes the opportunity to review proposals at this stage and was pleased to welcome the client along with the design team and local authority representative. Following an illuminating presentation which provided a very helpful overview of the issues, the Commission would direct the client and their team to the following key issues:

Planning Context

In the view of the Design Commission for Wales a contemporary design approach is entirely logical and should present no significant barriers to achieving planning consent. Housing and planning policy at a national and local level support the delivery of homes and promote good design and high quality. The key question that follows is whether this particular design, arising from the decision to take a contemporary approach, is the right one.

Design considerations

A number of design decisions flow from the express desire of the client to retain remnants of the existing cottage structure. This places a significant constraint on the possibilities of the site and the scope afforded the architectural team. Following discussion of the impact of this constraint, we would urge the team and the client to explore 'what if' scenarios and test them accordingly.

Releasing the constraint of the remnant of the cottage structure would allow consideration of full demolition and testing of new possibilities by the client and design team. These might include the freedom to test the best location on the site for a replacement dwelling; a fresh approach to the plan and consideration of a simplified form and the approach to the section; enhancement of the relationship with the surrounding properties and optimisation of the living spaces and number of storeys. Consideration of the potential for bedroom spaces at ground floor level with living spaces above could more fully exploit the views and maximise the potential for enjoying them. Ways to accommodate the stone remnants of the cottage structure may include landscape treatments or other means of re-using or incorporating the materials. Further consideration of this and full exploration of imaginative and creative approaches to the frontage would also be beneficial.

Releasing this key constraint may also have practical and financial advantages for the client. Similarly, whilst the 'fabric first' approach to building performance is welcomed, there is now an opportunity for further testing of demand reduction and possible generation given the southerly aspect of the site, which could be useful in informing a fresh design strategy.

The Design Commission for Wales is supportive of the client's desire to build their 'dream home'. We encourage further boldness in their vision and urge the liberation of their design team, to allow them to test and fully consider the potential of the site and the

wider location. We would be pleased to consider new options arising from this testing and encourage them to return to discuss and review the potential outcomes.

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

Attendees

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| Client/Agent/Developer: | Mr & Mrs Morris |
| Design Team: | Carolyn Merrifield, Downs Merrifield |
| Local Planning Authority: | Morgan Howell, Vale of Glamorgan Council |
| Statutory consultees: | None present |
| Design Review Panel: | |
| Chair | Kedrick Davies, Urban Designer, Town Planner |
| Lead Panellist | Mike Gwyther-Jones, Architect |
| Panel | Richard Woods, Architect Angela Williams, Architect Steven Smith, Architect and Urban Designer Carole-Anne Davies, Chief Executive, DCFW |
| Observers: | Neil Williamson, Landscape Architect John Lloyd, Building Services Engineer Kalina Marinovska, Downs Merrifield |