



DESIGN  
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# Design Review Report

Mumbles Pier and Foreshore

**DCFW Ref: 63A**

Meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> September 2018

## Review Status

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

## PUBLIC

13<sup>th</sup> September 2018  
26<sup>th</sup> September 2018  
Mumbles, Swansea  
Mixed use  
63A  
Reserved Matters

## 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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An earlier consultation through Design Review was undertaken on the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2010 on the outline proposals for this site.

Pre-application Consultation was undertaken in November 2017.

Following outline consent the Reserved Matters planning application was validated on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2018. A range of planning conditions are to be met in the current proposal.

## The Proposals

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The proposals comprise a reserved matters application for regeneration of the land and buildings around Mumbles Pier and Foreshore. All existing buildings, apart from the Cinderella ballroom, are to be retained and new buildings include 24 flats with undercroft parking on the coastal strip, and a hotel/spa/conference suite on the site of the ballroom. The pavilion building is to be regenerated to provide café, games/entertainment centre, retail units/gallery etc. A new boardwalk would be constructed beyond the sea wall, with public parking between it and the existing road. RNLI buildings and restaurant within the restored Pier Hotel would be retained. Public realm improvements include a new pedestrian boardwalk with shelters, kiosks, planting beds and artwork along its length, improved access to the sand and shingle beach and to the big apple car park on the top of the cliff, and space for outdoor performance, events and exhibitions adjacent to the entrance to the pier.

## Main Points

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DCFW accepts the principle of development and supports the aspiration to regenerate Mumbles Pier and foreshore to create a vibrant mixed use area which contributes to the Local Authority's vision as detailed in their Regeneration Framework. The sensitive and valuable nature of this site however requires a sophisticated response, of the highest design excellence and quality.

The following points summarise key issues from the review meeting and should be considered to inform any further design work:

### **Architectural approach**

The current proposals represent a significant diversion from the originally submitted scheme. This design flexibility has been agreed with the Local Planning Authority through an amended condition. The architectural approach taken with this iteration of the scheme currently lacks clarity in terms of overall vision. Compromises appear to have been made throughout the design process which has led to dilution of a clear architectural vision. This design solution for both the mixed use building and the apartment block would benefit from being re-visited to ensure it achieves the aspiration of the Regeneration Framework and the potential of this valuable site. A holistic approach to the public realm throughout the site would significantly strengthen the coherence of proposals.

### **Scale and massing**

The mass of the new hotel building appears bulky against the adjacent, retained heritage structures, an important relationship as recognized by the design team. Further testing of the scale and massing of proposals would help to demonstrate whether the current proposed mass is the most appropriate solution.

### **Landscape approach**

It is disappointing that a landscape architect is not yet part of the design team given the quantum and importance of the public realm within the proposals. It is imperative that a landscape expert is secured to contribute significantly to the proposals. The heavily exposed site will be a hostile environment for planting meaning that the public realm design must be very well considered to create a pleasant place to spend time, can support any planting designed into it and strengthens the response to the importance of the site.

### **Movement and pedestrian environment**

The dedicated public space for pedestrians and cyclists along the shore should be well considered to ensure the space is pleasant and active. Clarity in the design and feel of the space should prevent any potential conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists. Where vehicles are introduced to the space there should be clear pedestrian priority which is obvious to both pedestrians and vehicle users. The scheme currently lacks clarity in how it will work, relationship to the context, and the experience of its users. Opportunities to connect these routes to wider transport networks should be further explored to ensure the site is as well connected as possible.

Options for the boardwalk would benefit from further exploration to test whether it should be higher, lower or at the same level as the parking. This would help identify the most appropriate solution to allow visitors to enjoy the valuable environment whilst avoiding the visual dominance of the large amount of adjacent parking. This should be tested through sections or models. The spaces at either end of the boardwalk also need careful design to ensure a smooth integration between the boardwalk and the route to the Mumbles at one end, and the pier and associated facilities at the other.

Consideration should be given as to how the buildings and spaces around them may be well used even in the winter months. For the scheme to be viable it will need to be used at all times of year, and an overly hostile winter environment for residents and visitors must be avoided.

The use of the ground floor of the apartment block for parking is understood to be a consequence of flood risk consideration. This constraint requires the design to work harder to create a pleasant condition for residents and visitors along this inactive frontage. The relationship between the ground floor of the building and street, and the treatment of the public realm will be important in improving this condition, along with the materiality of the elevations overall. 'Pop out' balconies may help to activate this elevation, in addition to providing valuable spaces for residents that could benefit from east-west sun. The distinction and relationship between private and public space in this area should be clear to residents and visitors. This can be achieved through design and materiality.

Overall, whilst it is recognized that a great deal of work has been invested in addressing conditions and other local authority requirements, the further testing identified above and an assessment of how the whole scheme works as a coherent, appropriate response to this important site would be beneficial.

### **Arts and creativity**

An arts consultant may be beneficial to the design team in order to add value to the public realm. This input could help to positively engage people and contribute to the quality of the public spaces, public realm design, lighting or landscape design. An arts consultant could bring a more sophisticated approach than the placing of sculpture/ objects, whilst also adding value to consultation processes by effectively engaging the community in inclusive, creative processes.

### **Representation and communication**

The design team and Local Authority should explore further constructive, collaborative ways to engage with the local community in order to deliver a scheme of the highest quality which benefits both local people and visitors to the area.

Sketches from the perspective of pedestrians and users of the various spaces would aid understanding and communication of how these spaces will feel at ground level.

### **Next steps**

The Commission would welcome further opportunity to review the scheme and continue constructive dialogue however we recognize the time constraints. Given the imminence of the committee date, this may need to be via a desktop review of re-submitted materials.

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**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

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Agent/Client/Developer:	Fred Bollom, AMECO
Architect/Planning Consultant:	Kevin Matthews, Huw Griffiths Architects Geraint John, Geraint John Planning
Local Authority:	Steve Smith & David Owen, City and County of Swansea Council
Design Review Panel:	
Chair	Andrew Linfoot
Lead Panellist	Angela Williams Matt Thomas Mark Lawton Carole-Anne Davies, Chief Executive, DCFW Wendy Maden, Design Advisor, DCFW
Observers	Gayna Jones, Chair, DCFW