

Design Review Report

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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

CONFIDENTIAL

Meeting date	Tuesday 16 July 2013
Issue date	Tuesday 30 July 2013
Scheme location	Buckley's Brewery Site Llanelli
Scheme description	Refurbishment/residential and public realm
Scheme reference number	83D
Planning status	Pre-Application; Full application and Listed Building Consent submission anticipated, Oct. 2013
Declaration of interests	Jonathan Adams declined to be on the Panel for this scheme as he declared an existing relationship with Grŵp Gwalia

Consultations to date

Planning consent was achieved in 2004 for redevelopment of this site. Phases 1 and 2 have been completed and planning consent for 12 apartments as phase 3 has also been obtained. This review is to consider stage 4 and a formal revised planning application is expected to be submitted in October 2013. The project is likely to form part of a partnership approach, which will include a bid to the Welsh Government's *Vibrant & Viable Places* regeneration framework fund.

The Proposals

The Panel was pleased to receive an early presentation of this scheme which aims to bring the Maltings and Kiln buildings of the former Buckley's Brewery back to life, through the refurbishment and conversion of the Grade II listed buildings; the addition of six town houses, commercial uses and improved riverside public realm to the north bank of the River Lliedi. The scheme is part of a local authority partnership and is reliant on securing regeneration funds.

Summary

The Panel recognised the ambition and quality of the scheme which is capable of regenerating this part of the town. The Panel is also aware that there are challenges in developing this site, not least the nature of the bridge and access to the site from Riverside Walk, retaining its character, and delivering new uses.

The following points summarise the issues raised:

- The existing elevations of the Maltings place considerable restrictions on its potential for residential use. The Panel suggested that, even though the building has listed status, the apertures could be reconsidered and that a daylight survey should be carried out.
- The Panel were concerned about poor daylight provision to lower levels on the north side of the townhouses. The ground floor living level flows to the garden yet the kitchen beneath has almost no natural light.
- The Panel thought that the introduction of roof lights to bring light to the upper floor of the Maltings was positive; these should be positioned on the north face away from the more intact and publicly visible southern roof slopes.
- The Panel suggested treatment of the townhouse garages/garage doors needed further consideration, along with the general treatment of the north elevation and landscape in relation to the streetscape.
- There are several issues still to be resolved with the areas of public and private realm. The width of the riverside walk in relation to the corresponding space outside the storage vaults was not yet resolved and needs further attention.
- The proposal for a dramatic set of steps linking the river walk to the river bridge is a creative and innovative solution in challenging conditions. However, there are currently some inconsistencies in the proposals including the respective width of the river walk leading up to and beyond the steps; the steps balustrading height etc.

Discussion and Panel response in full

The Panel was pleased to review such an exciting and challenging development that has the potential to breathe new life into this part of town when completed. The challenges are not insignificant and the Panel fully appreciate that this scheme is dependent on securing regeneration grant funding. The Panel was informed that the intention is that both apartments and new-build townhouses will be made available via the Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO) model. These will be aimed at eligible local people who are unable to access the private housing market.

There are several inherent design difficulties in converting the building, including the limitations of pedestrian access to and from the riverwalk, achieving good daylight in the properties and structural matters with the Maltings building. The whole of the development is on a flood plain and the townhouses will need to be safeguarded

against flooding. The accommodation on the ground floor of the Maltings will be used for storage or commercial only.

The Panel were interested to know about the energy strategy which has yet to be developed. The aim is to ensure the restoration is energy efficient in terms of short and long term solutions. The current plans indicate individual boilers in the centre of the Maltings building but means of dealing with condensate and flues was not yet clear.

An aspiration for the stonework in the apartments to be left exposed, will have implications for the thermal envelope. The team had not yet agreed the sustainability target, in part because this will be determined by the terms of the grant if successful.

A lengthy discussion about the treatment of the space between river and buildings generated several important considerations principally, that the space between the arches and the proposed ramp down from the bridge should be useable. In order to ensure sufficient space is available the Panel suggested that the river walk might reduce in width as it approaches the bridge. Future adoption and management of both the river walk and the space in front of the arches is still for discussion with the local authority.

The Panel thought that the proposal to stagger the townhouses on plan might be more successful as a straight terrace. The mix of brick and render finish on these houses might be better and more distinctive and complementary if detailed fully in brick. The lower level of the townhouses containing the kitchen was poorly lit, warranting further consideration. The ceiling height of the commercial spaces was a concern but the Panel understood this is a characteristic of the Maltings.

The Panel spent some time discussing how best to achieve fluent movement of people from the bridge down to the site. The most likely solution would be to provide a zig-zag ramp incorporated within flights of steps. There is a risk though that this approach may dominate the site so will need careful handling. Pedestrian movement from the riverwalk to the site is currently problematic but the team were keen to provide a successful solution to maximise the impact of the development and use of the urban realm.

Overall the Panel welcomed the opportunity for redevelopment of this site, revitalising the former brewery area and energising this part of the town.

The targets for energy efficiency and sustainability have not yet been determined but the Panel were reassured that the team are aiming as high as possible within the constraints of the site characteristics. The Panel will however want to know more about the strategy at any subsequent meeting, as the scheme progresses.

The Panel would welcome a further presentation as the scheme progresses and wish the team every success with this challenging site.

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

Appendix 1 Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer – Grŵp Gwalia	Elfed Roberts Ffion Lanchbury Jonathan Hughes
Architectural/Urban Designer – Powell Dobson Architects	Andrew Nixon
Planning Authority – Carmarthenshire CC	Eifion Bowen John Thomas Simon Rees
Design Review Panel Chair Lead Panellist	Alan Francis Lynne Sullivan Christopher Jones Richard Parnaby
Observing Recording	Carole-Anne Davies, DCFW Sue Jones, DCFW