

## 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.



# Design Review Report

## Review status

**PUBLIC**

Meeting date	Thursday 14th March 2013
Issue date	Thursday 28th March 2013
Scheme location	Dickie's Boat Yard, Bangor - phase 2
Scheme description	Residential and commercial
Scheme reference number	40C/P2
Planning status	Pre-application
Declaration of interests	None

## Consultations to date

This scheme has not yet been formally submitted for planning although a public consultation was undertaken in February 2013. Following the consultation DCFW has received correspondence from several members of the public and local interest groups. These were acknowledged and the Local Planning Authority were made aware of the correspondence.

## Summary

The scheme is for a residential development on the site of former Dickie's Boat Yard, Beach Road, Bangor; a vacant site, this scheme is the second phase of development.

The development is on a peninsula and the site is considered unique in character. Whilst the importance of maximising sea views for as many units as possible is a key commercial consideration the corollary of this is that the proposal is very prominent and highly visible. The Panel agreed that with the LPA comments that a high quality solution and potentially award winning development with the emphasis on quality is required. This is an outstanding site and location and it requires an outstanding response.

The Panel supports the principle of development on this site which is crucially important for the perception of Bangor and its relationship with the Menai Straits waterfront. The site is in proximity to an area of outstanding natural beauty with a particular coastal landscape context and which benefits from views of Snowdonia and historical association with the Porth Penrhyn area. However, the current proposal fails to respond to the unique character of the site and the unique opportunities of developing it.

The Local Authority has requested a high quality landmark building on the site and the Panel would support this. A landmark building may enable the footprint of development to be reduced whilst not reducing density; however, the view of the development from other areas must be considered fully. Excellent urban and architectural design are required if this is to be achieved.

The Panel is surprised at the lack of commercial space proposed although they appreciate that currently commercial uses may be difficult to occupy. The location of the commercial car park preserves the views for the Phase 1 development and the Panel thought this had a detrimental effect on the remainder of the site.

Clarity is needed in terms of public and private spaces within the development as deliberate separation of spaces may have a negative effect on the quality of the appearance. The Panel commended the path flowing around the site but would suggest that the path is overlooked by frontages not rear gardens.

A mixture of well-designed flats and townhouses would be supported with an element of affordable housing also incorporated.

Overall the Panel considered that the current proposals did not reflect the potential of the site and the surrounding area or the quality required to realise that potential and make a positive contribution to the location. The treatment of the public realm and the appearance, form and massing, particularly of the taller elements, should be reconsidered.

### **Discussion and Panel response in full**

This important site in Bangor is beautifully located with stunning views. The masterplan illustrated commercial use on this site with an element of residential. However, the interest in residential within Phase 1 and the apparent lack of interest in commercial use has resulted in this proposal being mainly residential with possibly 25% of affordable (not a clear commitment at the time of review). The proposal suggests that some ground floor active frontage will be commercial.

The Local Planning Authority has indicated that mixed use and more commercial proposals are preferred for the site with a high quality landmark building. It is important for the development to demonstrate support for the needs of Bangor, a principal city in north west Wales, and the wider community.

The location of the car park is intended to preserve the views of the Phase 1 development but the Panel thought this area would be better as residential. Whilst recognising that there is a shortage of car parking in the area, the Panel did not support the provision of commercial parking as a waterfront use.

The proposal does not have a clear design concept and the Panel were unclear as to the design rationale behind the scheme and what had driven the urban design and public realm. Boundaries between the public and private spaces are unclear as is the management of communal space. The provision of a path around the development is welcomed but would be improved if the front of properties faced it rather than the rear as is proposed.

The commercial units at street level were very small which may constrain potential uses. The Panel would like to see a movement strategy for the site as the design did not demonstrate how it would encourage users from outside the immediate location. The connectivity of the site to Bangor was not obvious. The Design and Access Statement should provide a starting point informed by an analysis of constraints along with the movement strategy, which inform and demonstrate a high quality design approach.

The massing of the site appears monolithic in the proposal with a large expanse of 7 storey buildings. The Panel felt that greater modelling and differentiation in massing should be incorporated. With higher design quality a taller slimmer landmark building might even be

justified, whilst not reducing the density, providing more scope to advance the character and use of the areas between buildings.

The Panel would like to have seen evidence of a landscape and visual assessment of the development. There was no sustainability strategy evident that might drive a high quality design approach.

In summary, the proposals do not make the most of the unique character of this stunning location and surrounding area. The scheme has been driven by residential interest, not commercial uses as was originally envisaged. The reason for the current orientation of the units needs clarification as does the siting of the commercial car park. Overall the current proposal lacks basic urban design principles.

The development does not encourage connectivity with Bangor and the surrounding area or optimise the views to and from the development. This is a critically important site with views of national significance in either direction; the design should aim for a high quality scheme of award winning standard that will improve the perception of the area and generate interest for the local community and visitors alike.

The Commission would be happy to consider this important scheme again in the future, preferably at the pre-planning stage. We would encourage the developers to reconsider this scheme in its unique setting and make every effort to achieve a proposal of the requisite high quality.

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

## Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer	<u>Watkin Jones</u> Iain Smith Jason Berry Dave Roberts
Planning Authority - Gwynedd County Council	Glyn Llewelyn-Gruffudd
<u>Design Review Panel</u> Chair and Lead Panellist	Ewan Jones Toby Adam Chris Jones Elfed Roberts