



# Design Review Report

Hermitage Field,

Reynoldston

Meeting of 30<sup>th</sup> October 2014



## 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 Agenda items. Any such declarations are recorded here and in DCFW's central records.

### Review Status

### CONFIDENTIAL

Meeting date	30 <sup>th</sup> October 2014
Issue date	xxth November 2014
Scheme location	Reynoldston, Gower
Scheme description	Residential
Scheme reference number	54
Planning status	Pre-application

## Declarations of Interest

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None declared.

## Consultations to Date

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The project is at an early stage and no consultations have been undertaken to date.

## The Proposals

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This proposal is for the development of 4 no. two storey dwellings with associated access and landscape works on a previously agricultural field.

## Main Points

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### Early Consultation

The Design Commission welcome the opportunity to review this scheme at an early stage as this has enabled valuable preliminary discussions that should guide the design team in the development of the proposals. The succinct and diagrammatic quality of the emerging Design and Access Statement is encouraging and we would be pleased to see the document continued in this way.

Whilst the proposals are at an early stage, the Commission is encouraged by the approach to design that seeks to establish a contemporary approach to the Gower vernacular. The Commission are supportive of this approach but need to be convinced of how the different elements of this fit within the context, as explained below.

The main points that were raised in the review are provided below.

## **Consultation with the Local Authority**

It is understood that informal discussions have been had with the highways department of the Local Authority which have been generally supportive of the approach to access. We would recommend that these discussions are documented.

A pre-application meeting has not yet been held with the Local Planning Authority but is intended to be undertaken. The principle of development in this location is a matter to be discussed with the Planning Authority and early consultation will provide a better understanding of the key matters to be addressed.

## **Energy Strategy**

Setting out the approach to energy at an early stage can add value by informing design decisions including form and materials from the beginning rather than an added feature later in the design process. A clear direction on energy is currently lacking in this scheme other than a commitment to Code 5 equivalent standard. An energy strategy with clear objectives should be put in place at the earliest opportunity to ensure that this forms part of the holistic approach to the design. The strategy should begin with the site analysis and work right through to the detail of the buildings.

## **Contextual Response**

The relationship between the proposed properties and immediate built context is difficult to appreciate with the current drawings. Extending the elevation out to include neighbouring properties and a section that includes one of the existing properties to the north would help to explain and explore this relationship. The Commission welcome the idea of a physical model which would also demonstrate the massing of the buildings in context.

Particular matters of context to be explored further include:

***Impact of views from existing properties*** – one of the aims is to maintain a view from existing properties. Have all of the options for the siting of the dwellings been explored and what is the resulting impact for the properties?

***Building line*** – the proposed properties are set further back from the road than most other properties in the area. The justification for this needs to be set out in this context.

***Materials*** – some of the proposed materials are a departure from the current palette of the area. The appearance of the materials needs to be considered in the context of adjacent properties.

***Fronts and backs*** – the back of the properties and the back gardens face the existing lane so consideration needs to be given to privacy and boundary treatments that work alongside the properties that front on to the lane.

Initial consideration has been given to these matters but a reasoned justification based on the analysis of the context needs to be in place as the scheme goes into the planning process.

## **Glazing**

The fully glazed south-facing gable on the most easterly property could present a number of issues including overheating of the internal space, privacy challenges (how would blinds or curtains be incorporated), and light spill. The introduction of a brise soleil to overcome overheating would introduce an additional material and feature to the building that could detract from the current simplicity of the design approach. The approach to be taken here should be informed by the energy strategy.

## **Timber**

The use of timber would introduce a new material onto the area which may be appropriate for a new model of housing. However, consideration should be given to the exposure of the site as well as the challenges of detailing that this material will bring. If the detailing is not well executed this could detract from the quality and appearance of the buildings.

Wood Knowledge Wales and Coed Cymru are good sources of information about the local use of wood

<http://www.wfbp.co.uk/>

<http://www.coedcymru.org.uk/index.html>

## **Maintaining Design Quality**

The approach taken to the development of the site will have an impact on the level of control that can be maintained on design quality. Whilst the intentions of the landowner to oversee the development are acknowledged, there is a concern that if the plots are sold and developed separately that control will be lost and may be detrimental to the quality of the scheme.

## **Overhead Power Cables**

The nature of the overhead cables and any necessary easements need to be explored. The planning application for the adjacent site provides a potential source of information. The opportunity to relocate the cables underground within the road should be considered as part of the proposals.

## **Variety Verses Uniformity**

Currently the three of the properties are of the same design with the fourth varying slightly. There could be merit in exploring a variation between the properties whilst maintaining a consistent architectural language. Variety or uniformity will need to be justified in relation to the context, drawing on other examples and the overall appearance of the development.

## **Landscape Strategy**

A landscape approach is to be developed to help establish the proposals within the existing setting.

## Overall Approach

The Commission are supportive of a contemporary architectural approach and are interested in seeing how the proposals develop taking on board the matters outlined above. The Commission would welcome another meeting prior to the planning submission. We will invite the Local Authority to the review meeting and would also encourage the client to attend.

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

## Attendees

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Agent/Client/Developer:	Mr Patrick Bolton
Architectural/Urban Designer:	Rodney Graham – Design Engine Architects
Planning consultant:	Matthew Gray – CDN Planning
Design Review Panel:	
Chair	Carole-Anne Davies
Lead Panellist	Jamie Brewster Phil Roberts Jen Heal, Design Advisor, DCFW Amanda Spence, Design Advisor, DCFW