

Design Review Report

Holyhead Market Hall

DCFW Ref: 75

Meeting of 18th June 2015



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.

Review Status

Meeting date

Issue date

Scheme location

Scheme description

Scheme reference number

Planning status

CONFIDENTIAL

18th June 2015

1 July 2015

Holyhead

Market Hall refurbishment & reuse

75

Pre-planning

Declarations of Interest

None declared.

Consultations to Date

The Local Authority has provided an overview of the project as part of the VVP briefing to the Commission in December 2014. The Market Hall was identified as a project that the Commission would like to see again at Design Review.

The Proposals

The Market Hall is a significant building in Holyhead town centre but currently lies empty and is in a declining state of repair. The proposal by the local authority is to relocate the library and a range of other uses including a cafe, local history interpretation and college facilities. This will entail a complete refurbishment of the building and improvements to the public realm immediately beyond the building.

Main Points in Detail

The Commission welcomed the opportunity to consider the design proposals for this important building in more detail through its Design Review Service following the initial introduction in the VVP briefing. The following points summarise key issues that arose in the review.

Significance of the project

This is an important project for Holyhead that will have a substantial impact on town centre vitality as well as preserving one of the most significant buildings within the borough. The Commission is fully supportive of the principle and ambition of the project and considers it to be of great local importance that it be delivered.

Public realm

The presentation of the scheme lacked sufficient detail on how the building fits within the urban design context including where people are parking/getting off the bus, how they will approach the building, what views they will have and the spaces they will pass through and experience. This level of analysis may have been undertaken but it was not evident in the presentation or in the rationale for how the design has been developed.

The status of the land to the south of the Market Hall was clarified at the review as being subject to planning permission for residential units and not included in the proposals for the market or purchase of the site. This is an important space in relation to the reuse of the building and treatment of this space should be considered in the short and long term. If it is anticipated that the residential permission will be developed out, this should be shown on the plans and the space between the development and the market building designed and resolved. However, it is likely that this space will remain undeveloped for some time, in which case consideration should be given to interim treatment.

The Commission considers that an opportunity would be missed, if the space to the south of the building is not treated in conjunction with the building and if the local authority has no control over the design of the space, given the existing permission. The context has changed since permission was granted, with the market coming into community use, and therefore the treatment of the route alongside the building must be suitable for the proposed uses. We would like to see this treatment presented in the material submitted for future review meetings.

The character of all of the spaces around the building requires further consideration as they will all be different and will change at different points of the day. The prominence of the building represents an opportunity to celebrate and enhance it, particularly in the approach to the front of the building. The treatment of the roof spaces at the front of the building would benefit from being further explored as part of the setting of the building and, if possible, part of the public realm.

Parking

This building is in a central location with several existing car parks in close proximity. Requirements for parking should not be allowed to impede the project and its potential quality.

Accessibility

Accessibility is an important consideration given the topography of the site and a strategy is required to ensure that it is adequately addressed. An access audit for the building and surrounding areas would help this. The North East corner of the site is an important point on the approach from the bus stop and a level route to the building entrance. We support the intention to explore the design of this corner in more detail to provide a sense of activity within the building and to attract/direct people to the main entrance.

Design development

The concept of a fresh, modern interior for the building is supported and the design ideas appear to be moving in a positive direction, however there is currently a lack of sufficient detail in the proposals.

We encourage the architect to make use of sections through the building and surrounding topography to provide a full appreciation of the spaces and relationship with surrounding buildings and public realm. Sections will also help to explain and explore how the mezzanine spaces will work and the resulting floor to ceiling height above and below.

Further exploration of the connectivity and flow between the three spaces at the front of the building and the main library space would be beneficial and help to resolve and refine the design. This should consider security requirements, usage requirements, and the flow of people at peak and off peak times.

The proposal for changes in level within the main space, particularly the sunken area, needs to be considered in light of a thorough understanding of the movement of people through the space and acoustic requirements of the various uses. A simplification of the internal space may help and might reflect the open nature it has had in the past.

With the current level of detail it is unclear what elements of the interior will be retained and how this will influence the character of the space. The Commission would like to see more information on this in the future.

Sustainability

The team outlined sustainability measures that are being considered for the building including upgrading the built fabric, solar thermal panels on southern roof slopes, maximising natural daylight and potential rainwater collection. This could be an exemplar for a project of this type and the Commission encourages the team to go beyond BREEAM Very Good, strive for Excellent and be ambitious for the sustainability criteria for the building particularly given the ongoing running cost implications. Energy efficiency and excellent building performance will add value over the long term.

Contractor

Securing the right contractor is critical to ensuring that the right quality is achieved and the design aspirations are realised and a positive legacy is secured. The Local Authority is encouraged to consider how this will be achieved whilst giving due regard to supporting local supply chains.

Management

Once built the management of the building will be important for its success. Consideration should be given to who will manage the building including curating the use of spaces, what events will take place and when and how the building is looked after.

Next steps

The Commission is very supportive of the principle, intent and ambition of this scheme and the emerging design concept is positive. However, given the listed nature of the building and current gaps in information, we are keen to see it again and for the team to return, when more detail is in place.

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

Attendees

Architect:	Robert Chambers, Partner, Purcell
Local Authority (client):	Nathan Blanchard, Project Manager
Designer:	Ruth McKew, Director, Headland Design
Design Review Panel:	
Chair	Ewan Jones
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