

# Design Review Report

Development at Junction 33,  
Cardiff

**DCFW Ref: 50**

Meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> August 2014



## 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

14<sup>th</sup> August 2014

27<sup>th</sup> August 2014

Land north of Junction 33, Cardiff

Residential, mixed-use, park & ride

50

Outline submitted

## Declarations of Interest

---

None declared.

## Consultations to Date

---

None made known to DCFW other than the Local Authority's consultation on this and other strategic sites as part of their Local Development Plan preparation. DCFW afforded a confidential review meeting on this occasion, at the request of the LPA and given the very early stage of the proposals.

## The Proposals

---

An outline planning application has been submitted for this mixed-use development proposed for land north of the M4 Junction 33 in Cardiff. The site is allocated for development in Cardiff's Local Development Plan (LDP), submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2014. The site is steeply undulating in places, with significant areas of existing green infrastructure which the team proposes to retain or enhance to add value to the development. The proposed scheme comprises up to 1500 dwellings, a new primary school, park and ride facility, a new business park and employment area and a neighbourhood centre with the potential for retail space.

## Main Points

---

### **The qualities of the site – Adding value through good design**

As described in a well-illustrated Design and Access Statement, the site for this scheme benefits from a special landscape. The Design Commission welcomes the design team's ambition to maximise these benefits to make the development a different, special place. The challenge for the team is to resolve the various issues associated with the development, such as locating the neighbourhood centre, linking to natural landscape, providing an integrated transport interchange, and phasing development.

There is already a hierarchy of green spaces across the site. Making the most of these through the layout of the site is a challenge, and integrating any new public spaces with the green infrastructure will allow more people to experience their value.

### **The Neighbourhood Centre**

The nature and location of the neighbourhood centre is not yet clear. Whilst it should ideally incorporate significant areas of work space to add to its vibrancy, this may be difficult during the early stages, and, initially at least, it may need to be predominantly residential. In which case, the density and character of the housing at the centre will be important. Designing in flexibility for ground floor residential to become business/retail space in the future should be considered. It would be useful for the team to look at precedents for the type and size of centre they are aiming to create.

The centre will need to be at the heart of this new development, and will be of most value if the opportunities for residents to benefit from it are maximised. Integrating existing and new green infrastructure with the neighbourhood centre will increase people's day-to-day enjoyment of the landscape qualities which the team have highlighted as valuable to the development.

The location of the centre in relation to the transport hub will be important to its viability. If there is too much separation between the two, there is a risk that there will not be enough intensity of activity to support both. There will also need to be sufficient density of housing and/or sufficient numbers of visitors to support the centre.

The new school should also form part of the centre, providing facilities which can be used by the wider community in the evenings and at weekends to increase the vibrancy of the centre.

Most of all, the team need to understand the type of new centre they are trying to create. There may be a need for a Development Brief to be agreed with the LPA for this purpose, and for a range of exemplars to help agree common ground and placemaking principles.

### **Transport Planning**

Good transport planning will be crucial to this development, and the site's location next to the M4 junction and existing neighbourhoods provides many opportunities to improve Cardiff's transport network. The Design Commission welcomes the team's desire to prioritise walking, cycling and public transport use. In order to achieve this, full integration of various transport modes within the development and with wider city networks will need to be carefully considered.

There remains significant uncertainty around the proposed Metro/rapid transport network which the design of this development must consider. Ideally, the location and layout of the neighbourhood centre should work with the various proposed transport options.

There is potential to build the brief for the park and ride facility to include other businesses and services associated with car parking, including such things as car share/hire, convenience servicing and shopping. These services could stimulate the process of building a local centre for the development.

The Commission noted that the first phase of housing is planned to the very north of the site, and yet there is a requirement for the Park & Ride facility to be built before that or at least simultaneously, and for the first phase of housing to connect to it. This places significant pressure on the design team to either (1) locate the connecting link road away from the Neighbourhood Centre or (2) design the Neighbourhood Centre public realm now, so that it can form part of that link. Both options are fraught with significant challenges.

### **Character, density and design quality**

At this stage there is a homogenous character and density to the housing, but the Commission believes greater variation in density is needed. The team will need to find the best way to introduce different character areas, by varying density and housing typologies throughout the development. It was suggested that (illustrated) design briefs for the different areas might be an effective means to achieve this.

The design briefs need to be informed by, but not become pastiches of, the character and facilities that already exist in nearby settlements, such as those at Creigiau and Pentyrch. This would help to provide a better understanding of how those communities could best integrate with the proposed development - one of the design team's stated ambitions. These design briefs would also help to demonstrate to the Local Authority that the team is taking design quality seriously. They will also help control the development to maximise the benefits of the site, whilst avoiding 'default' development.

The nature and character of the work spaces should also be given further consideration. Different types of employment might suit the different work areas and the way they are accessed. The relationship between the employment areas and residential areas, and the routes between and through them also needs to be considered in more detail.

Cross section drawings should be used as a design tool to establish how alternative highways proposals might help determine different character areas. The space given to verges, islands, building frontages, landscaping and car parking will all set the tone of the place being developed.

### **Routes and streets**

Defining the character of the different streets and routes in the new development will be important, but of equal importance is understanding and responding to the nature of Llantrisant Road which runs along the edge of the site. How new streets and buildings address this existing road will be important. Sections through Llantrisant Road could be used to 'test' methods for prioritising non-car travel.

'Green routes' through the site will be one important way for the scheme to maximise the benefits from the landscape. A matrix of undefined routes is welcomed.

### **Sustainability and community**

It was suggested that a community-focussed sustainability strategy for the scheme could be developed. Since it is likely that a residents group will be formed to manage the green spaces, the group could take interest in other sustainability issues such as waste management and energy. Sustainability should be an integrated part of any design briefs.

One of the most important issues for a sustainability strategy at this stage, is the orientation and massing of buildings to allow passive design and 'fabric first' energy efficiency savings and demand reduction strategies to be used most effectively. The Design Commission recommends that the team refer to the Welsh Government's publication, *Practice Guidance: Planning for Sustainable Buildings*.

### **Further Engagement**

The Design Commission for Wales welcomes the opportunity to review this important scheme for the future of Cardiff. Initial concepts are still emerging and it is important that the design team now start to set out their ambitions and key strategies so that they can be further discussed in October which will then still allow time for further development before reserved matters applications are made.

**Comisiwn Dylunio Cymru Design Commission for Wales is the trading name of DCFW LIMITED, a Private Limited Company established under the Companies Act 1985 and 2006, Company No: 04391072 incorporated in England and Wales as a wholly controlled subsidiary of the Welsh Government. Registered office: 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Cambrian Buildings, Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff CF10 5FL T: 029 2045 1964 E [connect@dcfw.org](mailto:connect@dcfw.org). The comment recorded in this report, arising from formal Design Review through our Design Review Service, is provided in the public interest for the consideration of local planning authorities as a material consideration, and other users of the Design Review Service. It is not and should not be considered 'advice' and no third party is bound or required to act upon it. The Design Review Service is delivered in line with DCFW's published 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

---

Agent/Client/Developer:	Richard Keogh, Persimmon Homes
Designers:	Barry Williams, Barton Willmore Tim Gent, Savills Mike Axon, Vectos
Local Authority:	Not present
Design Review Panel:	
Chair	Alan Francis
Lead Panellist	Steven Smith Lynne Sullivan Maria Asenjo Amanda Spence Carole-Anne Davies