

Design Review Report

St Cyres School Site

DCFW Ref: 132

Meeting of 16th March 2017



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

Public

16th March 2017
30th March 2017
Vale of Glamorgan
Residential Development
N132
Pre-application

Declarations of Interest

None declared.

Consultations to Date

This is the first time that DCFW have been consulted on proposals for this site.

The Proposals

Redevelopment of the former St Cyres School site incorporating 225 residential properties and associated community recreation land.

Main Points

The Design Commission welcomed the opportunity to review the emerging development brief for this site at the concept stage while there is an opportunity to enhance the proposals. The following key points were raised in the review.

Concept Development

The draft development brief document presents a good summary of the aspects that have been covered in the site and context analysis, however there is currently a missing link in the narrative between the analysis and the concept plan. The explanation of the process that has been undertaken in working through the ecology considerations and community requirements with NRW and the local authority explain some of the decisions that have been made. This gap should be addressed in the final document.

We recognise that some of the requirements for the site are still unknown, particularly in relation to the community uses. This presents a challenge to successfully integrate these elements and provide certainty about place making opportunities, including the quality of the central space that the scheme concept is based upon. Clarity is required as soon as

possible to enable the design team to move forward with the approach to the edges of the area of the community hub. We suggest that possible options that may come forward for the Community Hub are explored to maximise good place making and establish parameters for designs, especially where secure sports pitch provision may present some challenging interfaces.

Review the Vision

Now that a significant amount of work has been undertaken understanding the requirements of the site and its constraints, it is an important time to revisit the vision for the development. Taking a fresh look at how the constraints can be considered positively to give the development character, interest and distinctiveness will enhance the proposals and will be more compelling for the community as well as prospective buyers. The vision should move on from the general commitments currently expressed in the development brief to be more specific about what type of place this will be, what it will be like to live there and how it will form the new edge to Dinas Powys. The present design narrative describes "village core" and "village edge" development and this should be reviewed. The location of the proposed development suggests that it should establish an attractive residential area on the edge of the existing settlement that draws on the wealth of local assets on the site.

Addressing the Woodland

It is important that future residents understand the importance of the ecology of the area and buy into being custodians of this important resource. Further work is required to ensure that the woodland that has been identified as important dormouse habitat is positively integrated into the development. The current arrangement of rear gardens facing onto the woodland presents management and security issues and does not maximise the site's potential. The tree cover is one of the key assets of the site that should contribute to the sense of place. Addressing this woodland edge more positively, for example with a footpath along the edge or a portion of the estate road with properties facing onto the woodland, will provide a better setting for the properties and will help to prevent unwanted issues that can occur at the back of properties such as rubbish being dumped over the fence and insecure boundaries.

Further exploration of the potential to open up the woodland in a controlled way that would allow important pedestrian connections to be made across the site is required. Looking at examples of what has been done elsewhere such as the former Hellingly Hospital site developed by Persimmon Homes and an application recently submitted at Crowborough by Catesby Strategic Land could be useful to explore more flexible approaches to integrating appropriate dormouse habitat mitigation / protection and public access. A more creative dialogue with NRW that recognises the presence of protected species and habitat as well as exploring opportunities for local education, information, appreciation and ownership of the ecological asset should be explored. Consideration could then be given to whether this space could contribute towards the open space requirements for the site.

Developing Character

The vision should inform the next stage of design of the streets and spaces which will enhance the character and identity of the development.

The topography has a significant impact on the land to the west of the site and the design must respond appropriately to this area in the house types that are selected and how they are arranged. Although this presents a challenge, it can also contribute to the creation of a great setting for the development if addressed positively. Retaining more of the field boundaries could further enhance this character. The design solution for these spaces needs to be worked through and evidenced in plan, elevation and section.

Balancing Requirements

Negotiation will inevitably be required regarding the delivery of affordable housing, retaining the important ecological habitat, providing the required community space, creating a great new part of Dinas Powys and generating a capital receipt for the site. Long-term quality and placemaking implications must be taken into consideration in this ongoing process. Development of high quality and design must be delivered on this prominent site.

It is positive to hear that DQR compliant house types have been designed that can be easily pepper-potted through the development. We welcome the principle of integration of affordable housing across the site.

Next Steps

We would like to see proposals for the site again to see how the vision and principles have been translated into the layout. Early scheduling of this is important to secure a date at an appropriate time.

DCFW also act as the assessing organisation for Building for Life 12 Wales and should be contacted for assessment when the application has been determined.

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. DCFW is a non-statutory consultee, a private limited company and a wholly owned subsidiary of the Welsh Government. Registered office: 4th Floor, Cambrian Buildings, Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff CF10 5FL T: 029 2045 1964 E 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

Architect/Design Team:

Rob Hammonds, Hammonds Yates Architects

Consultants: Darren Parker, RPS
Helen Donnelly, RPS

Client Team: Zoe Aubrey, Barratt David Wilson Homes
Stephen Butler, Vale of Glamorgan

Local Planning Authority: Mark White, Vale of Glamorgan

Design Review Panel:
Chair Simon Richards
Lead Panellist Alister Kratt
Panel Elfed Roberts
Simon Carne
Jen Heal, Design Advisor, DCFW
Carole-Anne Davies, Chief Executive, DCFW

Observers Gayna Jones, Chair DCFW
Hayley Kemp, Richard Matthams – Bridgend CBC