

# Design Review Report

North West Cardiff

**DCFW Ref: 49**

Meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> October 2014



The Design Commission for Wales extended a welcome to members of the Cardiff Liveable City Forum. The Commission hosted and chaired the meeting welcoming members of the Forum and their contributions.

The Forum is an initiative of Cardiff Council, supported by the Commission and was first convened at a meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> June 2014. The Forum stems from an initiative of the Leader of the Council and includes its officers and informed individuals, supported by the Design Commission for Wales.

<b>Review Status</b>	<b>CONFIDENTIAL (Pre-App)</b>
Meeting date	17 <sup>th</sup> October 2014
Issue date	xx <sup>th</sup> October 2014
Scheme location	North West Cardiff
Scheme description	Masterplan/residential development
Scheme reference number	49
Planning status	Pre-application

## Declarations of Interest

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There were no conflicting interests declared.

The Design Commission for Wales welcomed members of the Cardiff Liveable City Forum, an initiative of Cardiff Council assisted by DCFW. A 30 minute preliminary discussion invited forum members to comment/respond to a brief overview from the team. Forum members were invited to remain to observe the review meeting and to add further comment/observations, prior to the chair's closing summary. Forum members in attendance were Geraint Talfan Davies, Sue Essex and Mark Barry. David Anderson requested his apologies be recorded.

## Consultations to Date

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A programme of consultation has been initiated and some work has already been done with the surrounding community. Redrow informed the meeting that they are intending to appoint a consultant to undertake a consultation strategy going forward. The LDP timescale is a consideration at this stage.

## The Proposals

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The site is located approximately 6-7km north west of Cardiff city centre, bounded by the A4119, Radyr Golf Course, Croft-y-Genau Road and developments at St Fagans, Fairwater and Danescourt. Two disused railway lines run through the site, and there are large areas of green space and woodlands of varying condition.

Outline proposals comprise residential-led mixed use development of up to 7,000 residential units (including affordable housing). District centres are intended to provide

a range of shopping facilities as well as new schools, a library, community hall, pub, offices and healthcare facilities.

This is the second time the proposals have been presented to the Design Commission for Wales. The first meeting took place on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2014. This report should be read in conjunction with the earlier report from that meeting.

## Headings

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### **Movement**

The design team expressed a commitment to the development of an integrated pedestrian and cycle network including commuter and leisure routes, but it is not yet clear how this will be articulated within the development. Further explanation and visual representation is needed to identify where these will be segregated routes and where they will be priority lanes within the road corridor, as well as how they link to other routes and destinations. Sections to explore and explain this are being developed and the Commission would be interested in seeing these in the future. It is clear that topography has been considered in this context and the difference between 'hard' routes on steeper inclines and 'easy' routes that travel with the topography should also be reflected in the network plan.

The development of a transport strategy for the whole NW corridor needs to continue with the Local Authority. In particular the 'story' of Llantrisant Road needs to be developed with greater clarity and in collaboration with the Junction 33 development site, where interventions along the road are also proposed. Interventions that will enable greater connectivity for pedestrians are welcomed but the overall impact needs to be considered. The creation of additional traffic burden and delays on this route will be one of the greatest concerns for existing local residents and so the impacts on journey times and the potential offsetting benefits of alternative routes or additional public transport provision need to be very clear in advance of further public consultation and engagement.

The timing of the proposed Metro/rapid transport network remains uncertain so the design team should continue to retain provision for the route and design in flexible spaces within movement corridors. The detail of these corridors appears rather general where greater precision, in terms of the function of the space, parking, cycling, delivery and public transport, would be desirable. The density and mix of development within and around the centres must be sufficient to provide the footfall that would support a public transport node.

### **Zones/Centres**

The Commission noted that all of the centres have a common design style which is focused on a hard square and questioned whether there should be more variety between the centres with some having a softer and greener nature to suit their location and role.

More detail on the density of the residential development and how this filters out from the centres is required, although it was evident that this was being developed. This will

also enable the calculation of the approximate population within the five and ten minute walking catchment area and therefore give a clearer understanding of the level of service provision that is viable in each of the centres.

**Zone 1 - Main centre** – The Commission welcomes the progress that is being made on the design for the main neighbourhood centre. Concerns were raised regarding the number of access points into the square and how this could create a fractured edge and car-dominant space. Developing the hierarchy of streets across the masterplan could help to determine which routes should enter the space and those that could be diverted.

The dimensions of the main space should be looked at in more detail to ensure that the balance of activity and the amount of space is right. One approach to developing the proposals could be to consider 'a day in the life' of the space. This would help to identify the flow of different people through this space throughout the day and the impact of this on the design, for example deliveries, school drop off/pick up, the middle of the day.

The Commission is interested in the business model that sits behind the amount and type of retail space in this area. Flexibility is considered key to enabling the space to adjust to varying community, retail and commercial demands over time. Precedents for achieving this should be considered. Questions regarding the viability of the number of centres proposed still remain and there is concern regarding the impact on the development if they fail or don't materialise.

Further consideration of how the woodland will interact with and be integrated into the neighbourhood square should be given to ensure that the benefits of this asset are experienced in the heart of the development.

**Zone 2** – The integration of the listed farm buildings into the Zone 2 centre is welcomed as this could contribute to an interesting and characterful space. It was felt that these buildings should have a public use rather than offices in order to make the most of them. This area should continue to be developed as a place that people will want to come to visit.

The physical model was useful in demonstrating the visual connection between the centres as well as the topographical challenges to physically connecting them. Further use of the model is encouraged

### **Sustainable Design**

It was not clear from the review material and presentation what the sustainability objectives are and how they are driving design decisions such as a fabric first or CHP approach to energy, the housing typology and how the development is to be integrated with the existing communities. The targets mentioned in the previous design review report are still lacking such as energy, biodiversity, transport, housing, density, jobs etc.

### **Securing Design Quality**

This is a long term development proposal and therefore it is important to ensure that design quality ambitions are maintained over the development period and across several developers. It is understood that the development team intend to utilise design codes alongside the masterplan. The exact nature of the design codes needs further

consideration and this is an aspect that the Commission would like to have further engagement in.

The Commission welcomes the potential for self-build to form part of the mix of the 50% of dwellings that won't be delivered by Redrow as this has the potential to increase variety in dwelling type and style.

It was recognised by all that this large scale development presents the opportunity to create *the* place where people want to live. This aspiration needs to translate into all aspects of the design including public transport accessibility, quality of pedestrian and cycle links, and the type of housing and the facilities provided.

### **Engagement**

Consultation with the existing communities will be very important but consideration should also be given to how to engage with potential future residents to determine their aspirations for the community.

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

### **Attendees**

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Agent/Client/Developer: Jane Carpenter & Wayne Rees, Redrow

Architectural/Urban Designer: Edward Turner, Pegasus  
Gareth Williams, NLP  
Jon James, Scott Brownrigg  
Mike Axon, Vectos

Local Authority: Phil Williams  
Amanda Sutcliffe  
Emma Parsons

Design Review Panel:  
Chair Roger Ayton

Lead Panellist

Maria Asenjo  
Ashley Bateson  
Jen Heal, Design Advisor, DCFW

Cardiff Liveable City Forum:

Sue Essex  
Geraint Talfan Davies  
Mark Barry