

Design Review Report

Pantlasau Farm, Swansea

DCFW Ref: 58

Meeting of 28th January 2016



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

PUBLIC

Meeting date	28 th January 2016
Issue date	15 th February 2016
Scheme location	Pantlasau Farm, Swansea
Scheme description	Residential
Scheme reference number	58
Planning status	Potential candidate site in the LDP, pre-application

Declarations of Interest

None declared.

Consultations to Date

This is the second time that the Design Commission for Wales has been consulted on potential proposals for this site. The previous review was in December 2014.

Consultation has been undertaken with the local authority and with the public in line with the LDP preparation process.

The Proposals

The masterplan proposes 600-900 homes, a primary school and other community and commercial uses. The masterplan is being prepared in support of this as a strategic development site in the LDP. A nature reserve is proposed to the north of the site on land with a high bio-diversity value, which also provides a buffer between the development and the M4 motorway.

600 to 650 dwellings are proposed on the candidate site with the potential for additional development of 200 to 250 dwellings on adjacent land that is currently occupied by a golf course. The proposed layout allows for phased development of the masterplan and associated infrastructure.

It is now confirmed that the site will be allocated for residential use in the deposit plan for the LDP.

Main Points

This was the second opportunity that the Design Commission for Wales had to review this significant scheme and we were pleased with the progress that has been made on the masterplan but remain nervous about the delivery of the vision.

There is a strong vision for the development, an informative site and context analysis has been undertaken and feedback from public consultation suggests that there is local support for a more innovative design response rather than mass-market housing. It is, therefore, critical that the principles of the masterplan and approach are embedded into the SPG for the site and the sale of the land if the vision is to be achieved.

Positive improvements have been made to the masterplan including the relationship between the grid and green space and the relationship with Clasemont Road. This has resulted in greater clarity between public and private space whilst maintaining the vision of shared green spaces.

The following points were raised in the review and should be considered in the further development of the masterplan.

Clasemont Road

This is an important frontage that will help the new development to integrate with the existing neighbourhood. Improvements have been made; the orientation addresses the road more positively and the amount of commercial development appears to be more in line with what would be expected in this location.

The character of each of the connections to Clasemont Road should be considered, taking into consideration their anticipated level of use and whether they will be major or incidental access points. The main junction with Clasemont Road is very important and pedestrian movement, as well as vehicle requirements, should be taken into account in conjunction with the design of the interfaces with the commercial hub, school and residential development.

Commercial Hub

The parking and servicing area to the rear of the proposed commercial hub is an area of concern. The mix of requirements for this space has the potential to create congestion, conflict and an unappealing environment. There are several concerns regarding this space:

- The entrance into the space is located between the external seating area for the commercial units and ground floor residential units and could limit the appeal of both, with lots of traffic manoeuvring around the corner at peak times.
- The service requirements of the commercial units will require back doors and bins to be located in this area and large vehicles will be entering the space resulting in a potentially noisy and unsightly space which conflicts with the amenity of the residential units that also surround the space. Further detail is required on the arrangement of the space, service delivery plans and how the space will be managed.

- Parking for residents and customers will need to be clearly distinguished and would require careful management.

All of these aspects need to be considered for the busiest part of the day as well as quieter times.

Parking strategy

A positive mix of parking is proposed across the site which will help to prevent cars from dominating streets and spaces. However, steps will need to be taken to ensure that sufficient landscaping is integrated into the streets, in conjunction with the parking, to create the attractive environment envisaged. This needs particular consideration on the streets that incorporate service easements such as the water main, where landscape treatment may be limited.

Resident parking arrangements are likely to be required particularly given the proximity to the DVLA offices and should be understood at an early stage.

School

The requirements for the boundaries of the school site are presenting a design challenge. The need for a tall mesh fence around the whole site should be softened in some locations such as the western boundary, by increasing the amount of space available for landscaping. However, more work is required to ensure that the front of the school has a positive relationship with the street. Where possible the building itself should define the secure boundary of the site to minimise the amount of fence required. This may mean that there is a congregation space such as a courtyard beyond the building frontage. Precedents should be used to demonstrate how this can be achieved.

The school drop off area and its relationship with the entrance to the building needs to be carefully considered to ensure there is sufficient capacity as well as a safe route for pedestrians approaching from all directions.

The heart of the place

The integration of significant green space is a fundamental part of the vision and will help to give the development a sense of place, but further consideration should be given to where the heart of the development is and where people of different ages will interact with the streets, spaces and with each other. This will help in the definition of the streets and spaces which need to retain flexibility and accessibility to create an inclusive and permeable network of public realm.

Block design

The proposed perimeter-block design and the angle of some of the streets results in some very prominent corner plots. The apartment unit design for these plots requires further consideration to ensure that they adequately address the adjacent streets and spaces. Corner units on all blocks will need to be designed to have windows to provide natural surveillance to both the front and side.

The proposed 'alternative' four bed units are important for the success of the layout but further consideration is required of their relationship to the street, how parking is designated and the approach to landscaping and private garden space. The north-facing

location of these units should be taken into consideration in their design as well as how they might best take advantage of green spaces outside their demise.

Street hierarchy

Greater definition of the street hierarchy within the site will help to improve legibility and the transition from built edge to open space. In particular, the lanes towards the edge of the development could be a little softer and more informal in design through consideration of kerb requirements, variation in road width and corner radii and parking arrangements. This will help to resolve the relationship between the properties to the north of the site and the nature reserve which is currently unclear.

Green fingers

There are some locations where it would be beneficial to connect the proposed green fingers with the surrounding green space. This could mean the removal of some road connections but the overall plan is highly permeable so this could be accommodated.

Environmental strategy

More detail is needed on the approach to an integrated environmental strategy. For example, whether there will be an energy centre, community heating strategy, photovoltaics etc and how this will influence the plan. These elements should be taken into consideration at this stage as they have space and orientation implications. Off site approaches could be appropriate but they also need to be planned for.

Delivery

Establishing quality in the first phase of the development will be critical as it will set the tone for the whole site. Who develops this and how much of the site is developed in phase one are important considerations. Currently the proposed first phase of development is the lower density element with its costly retail/residential hub. The viability of that needs testing as will the delivery of the higher density phases that will follow.

The masterplan document needs to be clear on what elements are fixed and what is flexible so that the vision and intent is not lost when developers build out the site. A design code may be required to establish the important design requirements.

Affordable housing

The distribution of affordable housing is not yet known. DCFW support a tenure-blind, pepper-potted approach to the integration of affordable housing.

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

Attendees

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Developer/Landowner:	Henry Dare, Morris Estate
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Design Review Panel:	
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