

# Design Review Report

Roath Brook Flood Defence,  
Cardiff

**DCFW Ref: 43**

Meeting of 8<sup>th</sup> May 2014



## Declarations of Interest

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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	8 <sup>th</sup> May 2014
Issue date	21 <sup>st</sup> May 2014
Scheme location	Penylan, Cardiff
Scheme description	Landscape/flood defence scheme
Scheme reference number	43
Planning status	Pre-application

### CONFIDENTIAL

## Declarations of Interest

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Panel Member, Ed Green lives within the area of the scheme. The presenting team stated that they were content for him to be present during the discussion.

## Consultations to Date

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Remodelling of the much-loved historic parks to accommodate flood protection works will need to address a number of important issues which are being explored by the NRW and their design team through a programme of public and stakeholder consultation. There have not been any pre-application discussions with the Local Planning Authority case officer at this stage.

## The Proposals

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Natural Resources Wales (NRW) has identified the need for flood defences along Roath Brook where it runs through a string of Victorian parks in the residential area of Penylan. The proposed scheme will incorporate significant flood defence structures within a landscape design.

## Summary

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- The Design Commission for Wales welcomes this opportunity to review the scheme at an early stage in the design process when there is potential to add value and maximise design quality.
- As the scheme is at this early stage, few design decisions have been made, though the scheme has been approved for funding. Therefore, at this stage, the review and report focus on the approach to design and potential impacts, rather than physical solutions.

- Better explanation of how the Environmental Impact Assessment is influencing the design is required, as well as further detail of mitigation and enhancement solutions being explored.
- Clear, continued communication with the residents and various other stakeholders is key to an integrated approach on a complex project such as this, with the potential for significant impact on the locale.
- The construction process and longer term maintenance of the parks and defence structures must be considered at the earliest stages as both will have implications for the design proposals.
- The Design Commission would like to encourage the team to bring this scheme back to the panel prior to making a planning application.

## Main Points in Detail

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### **Business Case**

The team explained the business case for this scheme was robust and had been prepared following strict rules set out by Natural Resources Wales (NRW).

The Design Commission was keen to understand more clearly the relationship between the business case and the impact on local residents' surroundings, and whether a lower level of defence would be considered if stakeholder consultation requested it. The team explained that this might be considered, but would have to be economically and practically feasible. A two stage design solution is already being proposed which will allow flexibility for future raising of flood defences.

It is important that the business case is clearly presented to the public, as this sensitive site requires a careful balance between flood risk and impact on the existing environment of the river, parks and surroundings.

### **Environmental Impact Assessment, Mitigation and Enhancement**

In the team's presentation of the scheme, the Commission was concerned there was as yet little evidence of how design proposals and aspirations are responding to the opportunities and constraints on the site. This could have been shown by the initial Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and the Indicative Landscape Plans (ILPs).

The Commission is keen to see how the scheme responds to the designations and constraints identified through these processes and, by a thorough analysis of the options and how the response contributes to design quality and therefore enhancement.

The Commission is pleased to hear that the team is genuinely committed to enhancement as well as mitigation through this project. At this stage, it is not clear what mitigation or enhancement will take place and the Commission would like to know more about how these might improve the landscape quality and use of this park which is an integral part of the fabric of the community. In particular, opportunities to provide education facilities and better interaction with the water should be explored.

Providing adequate flood defences in this area will require significant changes to the topography and the boundary treatments of the series of parks. Therefore, it will not be possible to preserve them exactly as they are now, or have been in the past. The Design Commission agrees with the team that good quality, well designed new interventions, which are appropriate to the site at this point in time, must be considered.

### **Consultation and Communication**

Due to the sensitive nature of the site, and local people's attachment to it, thorough consultation and clear communication will be essential. There are many local residents and business owners who will be affected by works in the area, and they must have an adequate opportunity to have their views heard, and must be kept well-informed of progress throughout design and implementation. Local people are also a useful source of information on how the parks are used and which assets are most valued.

Continued communication with other stakeholders, such as Cadw, Planning Officers, Local Authority Parks Department, Highways Department, Conservation Officers, arboricultural experts etc. will also be important in ensuring an integrated approach.

### **Use and Impact**

The team recognises that it is now essential that they establish a better understanding of how the parks and surrounding streets are used, and which aspects of the park system are most valued by the community. Doing so will help them to fully assess the impact of the various design solutions available. The parks are among the most popular and well used in the capital city. Many people run through the series of parks alongside the water, meaning that obstructing this linear route would be detrimental to their enjoyment of the parks. Similarly the open spaces could be rendered less useful as open space if they become too fragmented by defence structures.

As the team has identified, there are many issues to consider, and it is likely that no ideal solution to all of them will be found. The Commission has some concerns over the mix of defence types indicated on the submitted drawings with potentially complex relationships between the variety of types. Different solutions will have greater or lesser impact on certain aspects therefore, it is important that the team is clear about their objectives and the priorities of the proposed solution in each of the areas of the project.

The team confirmed that they were looking to develop a palette of potential materials.

The Commission suggested that the team consider the stated defence heights in their context, and that better proportioned solutions may be more appropriate even though they could be higher than is required for flood defence.

### **Construction Process**

Construction of the proposals must be well planned and considered at an early stage. The process will cause significant disruption for local residents, which must be communicated clearly. Site access and compounds should be carefully planned, as they will impact on parking and road closures. Equally, an understanding of the impact on the parks during construction must also be thoroughly explored with working space and storage likely to occupy significant areas.

The physical constraints of the site need to be set out more clearly. These may eliminate certain options by demonstrating that they are not buildable.

The team explained that communication with contractors would feed into the design process. This early involvement of the contractors will be useful and encourages a more integrated approach.

### **Maintenance and Operation**

Maintenance of both the flood defences and the park landscape must both be thought through at this early stage of design work. Simple, but effective solutions will work best in the longer term. Continued communication with the parks maintenance team will be important. Defining the roles of the parks maintenance team and those of NRW needs to be clarified, accepted by both, and used to inform the design solutions.

### **Future Engagement**

The Design Commission for Wales encourages the team to bring this scheme back to the panel prior to making a planning application. A Design Review session should be booked well in advance to ensure it takes place at a suitable date within the process.

At the next review, the Design Commission will need to see the following:

- How the EIA and ILPs have influenced progression of the design
- Response to feedback from community consultation
- Evidence of further communication with other stakeholders
- Detailed design proposals which reflect the above, including accurate cross sections which demonstrate the impact on the parks and their surroundings
- Details of proposed mitigation and enhancement
- Construction processes mapped out

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

## Attendees

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Agent/Client/Developer:	Marianne Jones, NRW James Goldsworthy, NRW Tim Hopkins, NRW
Designer:	Alice Johnson, Engineer, RHDHU Paul Jolliffe, Landscape, Nicholas Pearson Associates
Local Authority:	Emma Parsons, Urban Design, Cardiff Council Gary Jenkins, Cardiff Council
Design Review Panel:	
Chair	John Punter
Lead Panellist	Andrew Linfoot Ed Green Alan Francis Amanda Spence, Design Advisor, DCFW
Observing:	Carole-Anne Davies, CE, DCFW