

# Design Review Report

## **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

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	24 October 2012
Issue date	6 November 2012
Scheme location	Porth Teigr, Cardiff Bay
Scheme description	Public Realm
Scheme reference number	78F
Planning status	Application to discharge conditions pending

### **Declaration of interests**

Carole-Anne Davies declared that Emma Price is known to her professionally as an arts consultant and in a personal capacity due to a working relationship of some years ago. There is no current relationship. Ashley Bateson declared that in the past, he has had a professional relationship with Igloo. There is no current relationship.

Mark Hallett of Igloo is a Commissioner of the Design Commission for Wales which is a matter of public record. Igloo is committed to third party Design Review on all its projects in the UK.

### **Consultations to date**

Unfortunately the Local Planning Authority declined an invitation to attend and was not represented at the meeting. Written comments were received on the morning of review which, while generally supportive, raised some issues relating to materials, degree of hard landscape and balustrade design.

In view of the consented outline application for the whole site, it was agreed to make this report public.

### **Summary**

The Panel was pleased to review the latest development on Porth Teigr and to see the importance accorded to a piece of public realm. We note that important issues remain to be resolved, notably the creative input of the appointed artists Heather and Ivan Morison, but we are confident that the team will arrive at a successful solution. In summary:

- We would have welcomed more contextual analysis and specific reference to the overarching public realm strategy for Porth Teigr.
- We supported the design approach in general, including the use of an affordable hard surface material in order to allow expenditure on good quality planting and furniture.
- We regretted the lack of specific proposals for developing free play activities.
- We welcomed the plans for long-term maintenance and the choice of robust, durable and sustainably sourced materials.
- The proposed new, visually lighter and more permeable design for balustrades was supported by the Panel.
- The appointment of a professional arts consultant and artists of international reputation was welcomed as a reflection of the client commitment to contemporary practice of international quality. We stressed that as proposals for art works and/or processes within this scheme develop, they should be specific in their response to this particular context. We would welcome the scheme returning to us.

### **Discussion and panel response in full**

The Panel welcomed the opportunity to review proposals for this small but strategically important area of public realm. However, we would have expected an explanation of how this scheme sits within the wider Porth Teigr public realm strategy, and its role within the sequence of spaces along the circular Bay pedestrian/cycle route. We were uncertain of the status of the strategy itself, and suggest that it be updated in the light of this proposal.

The Panel was supportive of the simple and flexible design approach shown here, based on a holistic analysis of the issues including microclimate. However, we noted that specific proposals for free play were not well developed.

The Panel received a presentation demonstrating the approach of the recently appointed artists but noted that specific proposals were yet to be fully developed.

We acknowledged that the palette of landscape materials and planting was already well established around the Roath Lock BBC Studios, and agreed that elements of this should be carried through to this site. Self-binding gravel in particular, which has been used as an uncompacted mulch around trees and bushes elsewhere, when compacted would form an affordable and durable surface on this site. It was confirmed that this material is partly permeable and will be laid to falls. The site will be maintained to a high standard by the operators and not adopted by the local

authority. We did not think it would be appropriate to continue the existing Cardiff Bay public realm treatments into the site.

The proposal for a new, lighter balustrade design was supported by the Panel as being more visually permeable. We thought the footbridge and water crossing would be a sufficient break between the 'old' and 'new' public realm. The Panel welcomed the use of recycled and/or sustainably sourced timber for the benches.

With regard to the proposed 'bay beach' adjacent to this site and the recently installed security fence we were told that, pending resolution of legal ownership issues, the project team was working with the Harbour Authority to open up this area. We would like to see the potential access to the 'bay beach' indicated in the designs for the space.

The Panel appreciated receiving an overview of the work of the recently appointed artists, but understood it to be too early to receive details of specific proposals. An indication of an engaging process involving people and the emergent community developing at Porth Teigr is an interesting one, reflective of contemporary visual arts practice in the public realm. In physical terms we understood that the process or works may deal with matters of enclosure, collective space and social interaction, and should encompass a specific response to this environment and to Cardiff. We had some concerns about the relatively small budget of £47,000 but noted the developer's wider commitment to partnerships involving local people and cultural providers such as Chapter, and their wider commitment to supporting finance via their community fund, established through the Igloo 'green lease' arrangements.

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

## **Appendix 1**

## **Attendees**

Agent/Client/Developer	Igloo Regeneration (Mark Hallett)
Architectural/Urban Designer	LDA Design (Scott Carroll)
Consultants	Emma M Price Projects (Emma Price)

Morison Artists (Heather Morison)

Third Party

n/a

Planning Authority

Cardiff CC

Design Review Panel

Chair

Alan Francis

Officer

Cindy Harris

Lead Panellist

Steve Smith

Jonathan Hines

Ashley Bateson

Ben Sibert

Carole-Anne Davies