

Design Review Report

Iorwerth Jones Centre, Cardiff Living

DCFW Ref: N214

Meeting of 21 November 2019



Review Status

Meeting date
Issue date
Scheme location
Scheme description
Scheme reference number
Planning status

Public

21st November 2019
28th November 2019
Cardiff
Residential
N214
Pre-application

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.

None.

Consultations to Date

No previous reviews by DCFW.

The Proposals

The proposed development is one of the sites include din the Cardiff Living Housing partnership programme. The local authority has identified the opportunity to acquire the site and develop the site for family homes. The ambition is to achieve high quality affordable family homes, contributing to addressing housing need and maximising opportunities for reducing fuel poverty, integrating SUDS and enhancing amenity and public realm. The site is well served by public transport connections.

Main Points

The Design Commission welcomes the opportunity to engage with this proposal at an early stage and credits the local authority for the significant ambition of its housing partnership programmes. A number of strategic questions arise that are important to enabling their stated ambition some of which relate to internal collaboration and some external in terms of responsiveness to need and the pressure of timescales.

This 'bigger picture' strategic context is important in creating the conditions needed to strengthen the hand of the Council as a key public sector client, as well as for the design approach to individual sites. The Design Commission therefore considered it important to consider the strategic questions first, before moving on to the challenges and opportunities of this site. This is reflected in the structure of this report.

The 'big picture'

Cardiff Council has committed to an ambitious home building program through its partnership programme for which it deserves great credit. Some 30 or so sites are already underway and many more are in the pipeline. In 2015 the Council established key principles and standards for the partnership programme which are currently being revised. This offers an opportunity to integrate new national policy and legislation which has emerged since then and which is now applicable. This would include the a place-led approach advocated in PPW 10 2018 and the use of the Well-being of Future Generations Act Goals and Ways of Working, as strategic objectives embedded and made explicit at the outset.

The ways of working offer a useful structure for building a focussed, internal collaborative team and strengthening the Council's position as a client – this would also address the Council's Cabinet ambition to achieve more homes, of better quality in more efficient timescales. Such a team, taking a strategic overview of the whole programme could create the conditions for greater innovation on the client side, as well as incentivising design team to bring forward creative, innovative proposals. It would also allow for barriers which seem insurmountable to be more strategically and collaboratively considered within the authority.

The Design Commission is willing to work more closely and alongside the Council to assist them as a major client and delivery team, given the important opportunity they have identified with the housing programme. This could include support on the revision of design principles; taking an overview on common factors that present barriers to ambition; strengthening the urban design approach and supporting the housing-led team to achieve more with their design teams. The Commission is committed to making time and expertise available for this, and we encourage the team to make use of this opportunity.

The Site: The Iorwerth Jones Centre Site, Llanishen

Whilst the design work is at an early stage, stated timescales for pre-application, wider public consultation and planning submission are challenging, given the desire of the Council to deliver more and higher quality homes across the city. The site is relatively unconstrained in that almost all of it is developable and its use as a site for 20-30 family homes and a contribution to housing need is sound.

Currently, the options presented simply shift units around the site without sufficient design analysis and testing to find ways to address the key constraints that influence all layouts. These include:

- Prioritising people and place
- Establishing and enhancing pedestrian access and routes
- Maximising the value of the brook and wooded edge
- Diminishing private vehicle dominance/addressing highway concerns
- Testing design approaches which could achieve greater density and better land use efficiency whilst optimising orientation for good daylight and energy performance
- Addressing privacy and back to back relationships
- Addressing DQR and broader inclusive design strategies
- Integrating SUDS throughout.

This work is essential for creative, innovative, value adding solutions to have the greatest chance of emerging.

Next Steps

Mindful of challenging timescales we encourage the Council to create the time for design analysis and testing which is necessary for innovation and for identifying the most effective design approach to achieving the brief and the broader qualitative aims of the Council.

A more thorough site analysis exercise is needed to underpin further testing of options. The analysis should give greater and more detailed consideration of the site and its wider context. Consideration of site history, movement patterns, section, points of emphasis (such as the south-east corner). Testing should also consider whether other configurations, such as terraced arrangements, might be advantageous. Consideration of precedent might also assist this (reference was made in the review to the Goldsmith Street, Norwich City Centre, the largest PassivHaus scheme in the UK).

A number of factors including planning highway conventions could be examined further among a client-side team to establish and inform the revision of key principles and standards for all partnership sites. We encourage the Local Authority to ensure sufficient time has been spent developing the concept, reviewing precedents and ensuring design quality.

We will be pleased to consider the proposals again and to address some of the key items in the context of the wider strategic collaboration we are offering.

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

Design Team:

Architects

Lindsay Rees, Pentan

Andrew Hole, Pentan

Agent/Client/Developer:

David Jacques, Cardiff City Council

Elise Coalter, Cardiff Council

Joseph Thomas, Cardiff Council

Planning Case Officer:

David Davies, Cardiff Council

Urban Design Officer:

Mike Biddulph, Cardiff Council

Design Review Panel:

Chair

Kedrick Davies

Lead Panellist

Jamie Brewster

Toby Adam

Richard Woods

Angela Williams

Jen Heal, Design Advisor DCFW

Carole-Anne Davies, DCFW