

# Design Review Report

Felin Uchaf Cowshed Extension, Llangadog

**DCFW Ref: N218**

Meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020



## Review Status

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

## Public

23<sup>rd</sup> Jan 2020  
6<sup>th</sup> February 2020  
Llangadog  
Residential  
N218  
Pre-application, but two previous applications have been refused and withdrawn, respectively.

## 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.

Kedrick Davies, DCFW panellist is known to the client but has not formal relationship to the proposals and was not present for this review meeting.

## Consultations to Date

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No previous reviews of proposals for this site by DCFW.

## The Proposals

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The project is located within a group of 5 historic buildings in a rural site in the north west of the Brecon Beacons National Park. The site is remote, near to the settlement of Llanddeusant, and accessible via a narrow lane that runs from a two-lane road approx. 750m to the north of the site.

The applicants have owned the mill, cowshed and barn since 1979, and the miller's house, which also forms part of the site, since 1985. The mill and cowshed were converted to residential use as a single dwelling between 1979 and 1984.

The proposal is for the construction of a small extension to the cowshed to provide two additional bedrooms and a WC.

The applicants have proposed that the extension will be sympathetic in form to the existing building but clearly identifiable as newer through the use of appropriate contemporary materials. This proposal has, however, been rejected by the LPA due to the scale of the extension relative to the size of the existing cowshed.

## Main Points

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### **The existing sense of “place” on site**

The robust simplicity of the rural industrial architectural language of the site is something that could be further investigated and celebrated in any future Design and Access statements, to demonstrate how the cultural heritage of the National Park is conserved or enhanced and how other policy aims are achieved.

The idea of the site as a ‘hamlet’ that has been developed, maintained and enhanced over time is a powerful story that should be clearly explained in documentation describing the project. In particular, the relationship between the individual buildings seems to be of particular value, and any future development should consider and enhance this group as a whole.

The context of Felin Uchaf as it exists has been shaped by its physical, historical and cultural heritage, which includes the time and care that the applicant has invested into the place over many years. It is important that an understanding of the context is demonstrated in any design proposal.

### **The design of the extension**

A thorough review of the context of the existing buildings and the spaces they define, as well as the previous extension of Tŷ Melinydd to accommodate an artist studio, could inform the design of a sensitive and innovative building that would reflect scale and composition of the hamlet.

It would be useful if the composition of surrounding buildings and their context, were studied and illustrated in a future Design and Access statement in order to provide evidence of a design that enhances its surroundings. Thorough site analysis, as well as explaining the surrounding context and any constraints, will enhance the credibility of the scheme and inform the consideration of possible design options.

It is possible that a separate or linked building, rather than a direct extension, would be both easier to realise and a more successful design.

### **Presentation**

Presentation of the site analysis and design options through clear diagrams, illustrations and photographs could demonstrate how the proposal is suitable for and enhances its site. A strong narrative throughout the Design and Access statement is crucial in order to create a cohesive and convincing argument, which may inform future discussion with the National Park.

A compelling story, told through drawings and diagrams presented with clarity, is of critical importance in ensuring that whoever is reading the Design and Access statement has a full understanding of the context and the proposal. Submission

drawings and the Design and Access statement should clearly express the case for extending the cowshed.

The cowshed's architectural value lies in its relationship with the rest of the 'hamlet', but this was not apparent from the information presented. Any compelling argument for the proposed extension lies in the story of the development of this 'hamlet' and how its individual buildings have been restored and rescued over time. There would also be a benefit in analysis of local, or otherwise applicable, precedents.

Drawings with indications of the proposed materiality of the extension would also be useful, as it is currently very difficult to read the materiality of existing structures, as well as the intended materiality of the proposed structure.

### **Next Steps**

It may be beneficial to collaborate on this project with another architecture firm with experience of design within the National Park landscape. This could provide an opportunity to collaborate on an innovative and appropriate design, as well as easing the burden on the applicant of preparing a convincing and engrossing Design and Access statement, that accurately portrays and celebrates the context, while also making a strong case for the proposed development.

We would welcome the return of the scheme for a further review at timely stages if a fresh application is to be prepared and whilst design and DAS materials are being developed.

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

## Attendees

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Client/Design Team: Roger Mears & Joanie Spears, Architect,  
Applicant & Client.

Design Review Panel:

Chair

Ewan Jones

Lead Panellist

Chris Jefford

Panel

Matt Thomas

Steven Smith

Carole-Anne Davies, DCFW

Efa Lois, DCFW

Observing

Magda Fabisiak, DRP