

Design Review Report

The Big Shed, Tonypandy

DCFW Ref: 259

Meeting of 10th June 2021



Review Status

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

PUBLIC

10th June 2021
21st June 2021
Tonypanydy, Rhondda Cynon Taf
Retail + Residential
N259
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 and meeting Agenda items. Any such declarations are recorded here and in DCFW's central records.

Consultations to Date

None.

The Proposals

The project vision is to repurpose the site from a former supermarket (now vacant) to create a new mixed-use development that will contribute towards a regeneration of Tonypanydy High Street. The project will provide new residential homes, new office accommodation for RHA, and new commercial spaces that might include a Convenience Store and Bistro/café space. RHA are in negotiation with potential operators for these spaces.

Main Points

The Design Commission welcomed the thorough presentation of the design evolution of the project on a technically constrained site, and it was helpful that the team addressed the Panel's pre-review comments, explaining how constraints had affected design development. RHA's decision to locate their own office space on Dunraven Street in Tonypanydy shows a desire to lead on the regeneration strategy, and shows they are engaging positively with the concept of how a high street can be enhanced.

Masterplan integration

The scheme would benefit from formulating a response to the high-level aspirations for the locality, even if decisions about improving access to the station in the future, for example, are beyond the scope of this project. The scheme sits within a wider context, and the diagrams and analysis should reflect that.

'The Big Shed' concept

'The Big Shed' is a project concept that reflects the industrial history of the area, as well as suggesting flexibility. However, the flexibility and simplicity of the building solution for the block facing Dunraven Street seems to have been lost during the evolution of the design. If the branding and identity of the scheme has moved on from 'The Big Shed' concept, this may be worth exploring further.

Design approach

A holistic site-wide approach to the development would be beneficial, at present the project feels like two separate parts with only a limited interaction and relationship. It is important to consider the apartment building's location – its proximity to the river, as well as the direction in which it faces. This is currently unresolved, with limited amenity space, vehicle dominated areas, and a high number of single-aspect north facing dwellings.

The panel encouraged RHA and the design team to explore alternative layouts for the residential block, particularly at the lower levels. Alternatives to the double loaded corridor model should also be explored. It is possible that fragmenting the residential into two blocks would be beneficial. Lighting studies could help to inform the layouts, ensuring adequate daylighting to all new homes, as well as having implications for the location and nature of amenity spaces within the development.

Greater emphasis on quality external space for the residential block, and the creation of high-quality private and semi-public amenity space within the development would be highly beneficial to residents. Consulting a landscape architect would be useful when considering the design of the outdoor spaces. It is possible that a community facility, such as a community garden could benefit the wellbeing of residents, particularly if it becomes an opportunity for them to shape the landscape around them.

It is important to consider who lives in the residential block, and what they need from their homes. A 'day in the life' study of a few different residents could be beneficial in this context. Considering where residents could go to relax, where they could spend time outside, whether there is sufficient room in their flat to work from home, and whether they can accommodate visitors in their space could be some initial considerations.

It is also worth considering whether residents of the block would appreciate a shorter route to the high street, especially when running errands.

Placemaking

The design team would benefit from considering what makes this development uniquely of Tonypanydy. Developing the design to become something more ingrained in the narrative of Tonypanydy as a place could be a rewarding exercise.

'The Big Shed' as a project title and concept reflects the industrial nature of the history of the town. The design team referred to laser-cut screens that could be used to inform visitors of the history of the town. This could be successful, however, it is worth pursuing the concept of 'what makes this place uniquely of Tonypanydy' further, as the design is developed.

Future Involvement

The panel would encourage RHA and the design team to return for another review before the planning application for this project is submitted.

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

Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer: Rhiannydd Jenkins, RHA Wales
Kerrin McNie – RHA Wales

Architect/Design Team: Terry Morley - Holder Mathias
Ed Hoskins – Cambria

Other Consultants: Gareth Davies – Red Six
Daniel Ellis - Rhomco

DCFW Design Review Panel

Chair: Simon Richards
Lead Panellist: Toby Adam
Panel: Michael Gwyther-Jones
Wendy Maden
Steven Smith
Efa Lois, DCFW, Place Advisor
Jen Heal, DCFW, Design Advisor
Carole-Anne Davies, DCFW, Chief Executive