

Design Review Report (V2)

Ty Nant, Swansea

DCFW Ref: N250

Meeting of 18th February 2021



Review Status

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

CONFIDENTIAL

18th February 2021
4th March 2021
Swansea
Student housing development
N250
Pre-planning

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.

Note on current operational context:

The Design Commission for Wales is operating during necessary public health measures due to the impact of the Coronavirus Covid 19 pandemic and this report follows the recent online review meeting.

Consultations to Date

None.

The Proposals

The proposals are for a new 11 storey building, comprising of purpose-built student accommodation. An existing 6 storey office building will be demolished as part of these proposals. The scheme will provide 370 student bed spaces, alongside associated amenity areas. It will create a new entrance facing Swansea Railway Station along with active street frontages and communal areas. Off-street car parking and cycle parking will be provided in a sheltered and scaped courtyard are accessed off Powell Street.

Main Points

Relationship to context

The scheme would benefit from further consideration of the relationship between the proposal and its context. Further analysis of how the proposed development sits within the city centre would help both in understanding the rationale behind providing student accommodation on this particular site, and how the building itself relates to its immediate surroundings. This is also relevant in relation to the city's planning policies and enabling the project team to further justify the change of use from office to student accommodation.

Future-proofing the proposal

The project involves the demolition of a building that is no longer considered fit for purpose. In order to avoid such a scenario in future, it is worth exploring how the proposal's design could be adapted to accommodate a potential change of use within its lifespan. The design team highlighted that the floor-to-floor height of the current proposals would not be sufficient for an office environment. However, the Panel would encourage

the design team to explore the potential for flexibility within the building design in order to accommodate for alternative future uses.

Active Frontages

The scheme would benefit from further exploration of the opportunities to create active frontages for the building. It is also of key importance that the design of ground floor bedrooms is developed in a way which priorities inhabitant wellbeing, privacy, and security.

It would be beneficial if further design exploration work were to look at the detailing of a well-integrated, sensitively designed defensible edge to the ground floor bedrooms.

Amenity spaces

The internal amenity spaces would benefit from further design development, particularly regarding the opportunity they present for animating and activating the street frontage at ground level.

Massing

Exploring different massing solutions that could accommodate the project's schedule of accommodation on site could be beneficial to the project.

A more in-depth analysis of the immediate urban context would help inform the proposals and could help the Design Team to be confident that this massing solution is the most suitable. Wind studies may further inform the building massing.

Further massing exploration could also result in the proposal better integrating into the surrounding townscape. These massing studies would also be beneficial in future planning documents.

It is also worth exploring the potential future linking to the back of Swansea Railway Station, as an urban design exercise for the future.

Acoustics

Due to the site's location near the train station, it is of key importance that a detailed acoustics strategy is developed for the proposal.

Lighting

The scheme would benefit from the development of an exterior lighting strategy which would focus on security and safety for the students.

External Spaces

It is important that the courtyard is developed to have a greater relationship with the interior of the building and surrounding environment.

The orientation and shadowing of the external courtyard space and lack of sunlit spaces would benefit from further design exploration. More covered space within the courtyard would enable a greater flexibility of use both during inclement weather and during the evening.

The scheme would benefit from further development of the design of the rooftop terrace.

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

Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer	Jamie Rogerson, Watkin Jones Fergus Sykes, Pegasus Group Carl Taylor, TPM Pete Jeavons, Ensphere Emer Cunningham, Watkin Jones
Architect/Design Team	Chris Bolland, Brock Carmichael Chris Aitken-Smith, Brock Carmichael
Local Planning Authority	David Owen, Swansea Council Krystyna Williams, Swansea Council Kirsten McKnight, Steven Levrant Heritage Architecture
Chair	Simon Richards
Lead Panellist	Angela Williams
Design Review Panel	Maria Asenjo John Lloyd Neil Williamson Jen Heal, Design Advisor, DCFW Efa Lois, Place Advisor, DCFW