



DESIGN
COMMISSION
FOR WALES
COMISIWN
DYLUNIO
CYMRU

Design Review Report

Vivian & Musgrave Engine Houses, Swansea

DCFW Ref: 315

Meeting of 7th December 2023



Review Status

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

PUBLIC

7th December 2023
14th December 2023
Heritage/Leisure/Mixed Use
Swansea
315
Pre-application

Key Points

- The proposal presented have the potential to sensitively restore and expand the built form of this Scheduled Ancient Monument – subject to further testing with uses/users in mind.
- The project must now focus on business planning to achieve the project’s re-use and regeneration objectives.
- The purpose of the refurbished buildings must be established.
- The business planning process should define the means of access, establish likely footfall and potential anchor uses.
- Engagement with key stakeholders and users should be a priority.
- The project should contribute to a citywide story.

Consultations to Date

This is the first consultation with the Design Commission to review this specific proposal. An earlier consultation with the Commission took place, which included this proposal among a wider picture of Levelling Up funded (LUF) proposals and a wider masterplanning exercise. This meeting focussed specifically on the restoration and re-use of the engine houses.

The Proposal

The site forms part of the former Hafod Copper Works and comprises three separate red line boundaries (RLB) for planning purposes, incorporating 1D Vivian and Musgrave Engine Houses. The aim of this project is to bring the Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM), and adjacent historic buildings, back in to use for modern day purposes, whilst preserving the historic integrity. The intention is to restore the buildings to allow the display and interpretation of historic artefacts linked to the copperworks industry along with other suitable uses which contribute to the development of a destination offer. The project covers some 4,095m² with a current budget of £7,827,300 overall from a mix of UK and Welsh Government, Levelling up funding and Swansea Council matched funds. A

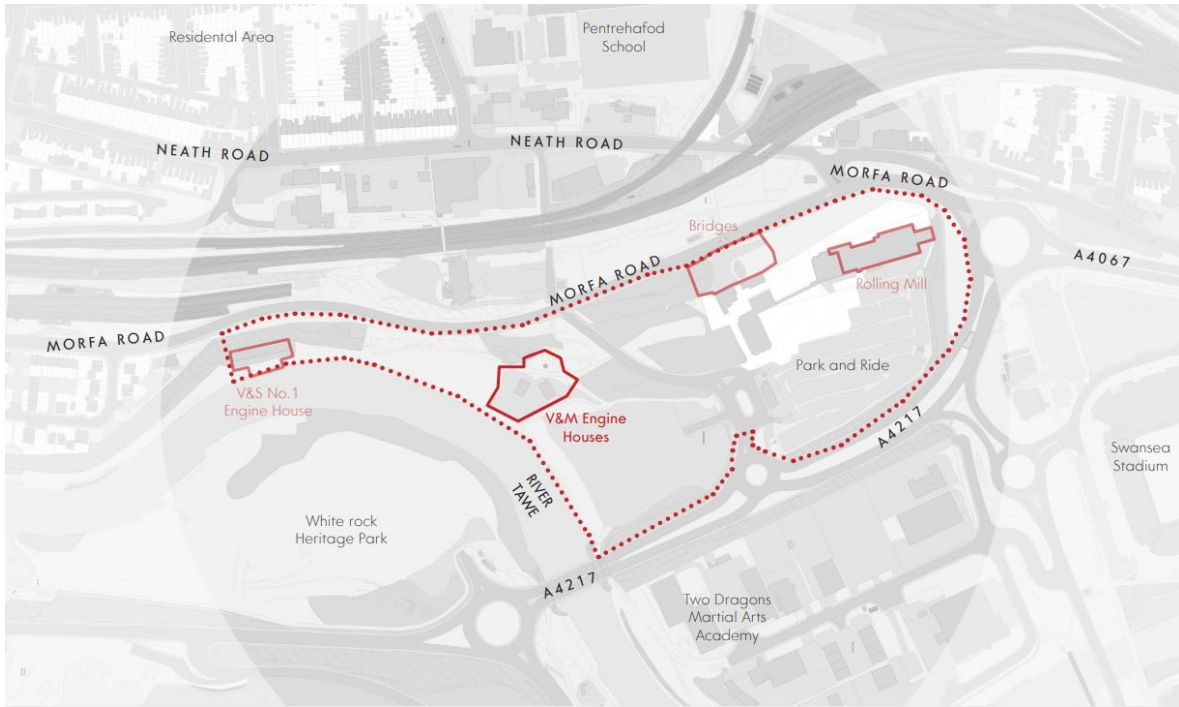
masterplan is progressing in parallel which will help inform the proposals for the site as a whole, including the redevelopment of the Hafod Morfa Copperworks. Some early exploratory approaches have been made to operators and potentially interested parties regarding the wider long term uses for the Vivian and Musgrave Engine Houses.



Aerial View of Proposal

Context

Public records note that the Hafod Copper Works was built by John Vivian in 1808-9 on the southern part of level land enclosed by a loop of the tidal River Tawe, forming part of the whole Copperworks complex. The area occupied by the works was bounded on the west by the Swansea Canal and later, to the north, by the Morfa Copper Works. A new mill and engine house was built in 1910 to house a single-cylinder Musgrave Uniflow engine, comprising a full height machine hall, c2m above exterior ground level, and a basement below; a freestanding chimney on the southwest side at the west corner, and an extension to the southeast shielding the cable drive. To the south east of the building, a flywheel and a set of rollers are also in situ. The machine hall is full height, open to the roof. The northeast half of the hall houses the engine. The buildings and remnants of the engine have fallen into disrepair over time and this project focusses on their repair and re-use. A local group of Friends is active committing voluntary time to the campaign for restoration and re-use. Today the site is identified as having a potential 1:100 flood risk, which is a key design consideration for both building treatment, landscape and public realm.



Site Location Plan

Main Points

The Design Commission welcomed a detailed presentation from the architectural team, which set out considerations for the stabilisation, restoration and potential new-build elements for the Vivian & Musgrave Engine Houses. A great deal of work has clearly been done in considering the potential for the sensitive restoration and expansion of the built form of the Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) and environs.

Purpose of Buildings

It is imperative that the client and design team focus turns to business planning for meaningful re-use and regeneration to take the project beyond a conservation-led architectural proposal. The design work shows sufficient testing of the possibilities of space and must now be matched with information as to the needs of particular users. Co-working, education and visitors/tourism destination users will have different needs and whilst the 'fix and flex' approach is recognised, there is a need for more tangible business planning and use/revenue modelling.

Establishing clarity in terms of future use is essential to inform further design and cost considerations. The purpose of the refurbished buildings is a critical factor and must be established clearly within the bounds of the essential LUF elements to be delivered in the stated timescale and more flexible elements which may come later or form part of a meanwhile use strategy. This is also essential for cost parameters and control.

Work towards defining the means of access, establishing likely footfall and potential anchor uses is important at this stage as part of the business planning process. This will further inform architectural/design decisions to be made in the next stages.

Engagement

Engagement with key stakeholders and users should now be the focus given the stage design work has reached. The consultation should include community groups, local interest groups, youth groups as well as commercial operators and representatives from arts, cultural and museum organisations in Swansea.

The engagement may inform the business planning and viability testing if a potential partner/operator/user group is identified. It is, therefore, important that the engagement is undertaken sooner rather than later.

Citywide Storytelling

Ensuring that the project contributes to a citywide story, attractive to residents and visitors, will form an important part of the promotion of the redevelopment as well as interpretation of the heritage offer and its importance in the Swansea story.

Next Steps

A Design Review is planned for the wider masterplan in the new year.

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 as 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

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Client/Developer: | City and County of Swansea Council |
| Design Team: | Ashley Davies & Tom Adams, GWP Architects |
| Consultants: | Chris von Tersch, Coreus Group Sophie Jones, Wardell Armstrong |
| Local Authority: | Catherine Pellymounter, Stephen Smith, Elliott Williams, City and County of Swansea Council |

DCFW Design Review Panel

| | |
|--------|---|
| Chair: | Wendy Maden |
| Panel: | Steven Smith (Lead for this scheme) Simon Carne Simon Power Max Hampton, Design Advisor, DCFW Carole-Anne Davies, Chief Executive, DCFW |

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.

Stephen Smith of Swansea Council recorded that he is a serving co-chair of the DCFW Design Review Panel but was attending the meeting on behalf of Swansea Council. Helen Kane did not attend the meeting due to industrial action related to rail services however we record that she is a serving member of the DCFW Design Review Panel.