



DESIGN
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FOR WALES
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10th February 2026

Jim Bailey
Head of Planning
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
planningservices@rctcbc.gov.uk

Dear Jim,

Re: Penrhys Planning Application - 25/1140/FUL

Thank you for consulting the Design Commission for Wales.

We held a Design Review for the Penrhys Masterplan in May 2025 and attach the report. The key advice from this review was that, while we welcomed the clear passion and drive to support the community at Penrhys, more work was needed at the time to demonstrate that the significant challenges the community has historically faced can be overcome with the proposed development.

We advised that robust analysis was needed to fully understand the design and locational challenges and that the proposals need to fully address the lessons learnt from the past as well as understand what issues are likely to continue to be a challenge in the future. Important aspects of the proposal needed to be clearer and robust, including the vision and narrative, the existing and proposed public transport services, the community facilities, the mix and location of affordable and private housing, and the phasing of the development.

The review did not focus on the Phase 1 plans in this planning application and there has not yet been a follow-up review as recommended to further consider the masterplan or the more detailed design of the different phases.

While we would always recommend a Design Review, which benefits from the expertise of our independent, multi-disciplinary panel and allows for discussion with the client and their design team, we have undertaken a high-level desktop review of the planning application and have identified the following initial observations:

- We have concerns about developing the detailed design for Phase 1 before finalising the masterplan.
- It is unclear how the affordable housing will be integrated within Phase 1 and across the site. The development should avoid concentrating affordable housing.
- The topography of the site is a significant challenge and we are concerned about whether this the right site to use the Tai ar y Cyd affordable housing pattern book. While the pattern book has been adapted to seek to address the topography, we would like to see testing of alternative approaches and house types that could potentially better respond to the steep site and minimise the need for retaining walls and sloping gardens and create a better living environment.
- The plans include a large green corridor running through Phase 1 and the wider site. This could be an asset but needs careful design to ensure it is successful and maximises its benefits to residents, is manageable and avoids attracting anti-social behaviour.
- We encourage ensuring the street layout is as connected as possible with the topography, avoiding creating cul-de-sacs and their associated turning heads, and integrates green spaces and avoids having leftover spaces.
- We encourage further consideration about how the flats are integrated to avoid them being surrounded by gaps and car parking. We would like to see whether alternative approaches been explored, such as walk-up flats and maisonettes.
- Further consideration is needed about how the design will deter speeding around the outer ring road in the future.

We encourage Trivallis and the local planning authority to bring this proposal to Design Review for more comprehensive advice.

Yours sincerely,



Max Hampton
Design Advisor
T: 029 2045 1964
E: max.hampton@dcfw.org