

## **Comisiwn Dylunio Cymru Design Commission for Wales**

### **Design Review Report**

<b>Meeting Date / Material Submitted:</b>	<b>14 October 2003</b>
<b>Location:</b>	<b>City of Newport</b>
<b>Architects / Design Team:</b>	<b>SOM and others (See report)</b>
<b>Scheme Description:</b>	<b>Newport Regeneration Projects</b>
<b>Public/Other Body:</b>	<b>Newport Unlimited (URC)</b>

### **Newport Unlimited, Urban Regeneration Company**

#### **Newport Central Area Masterplan Presentation 14 October 2003**

The Commission was pleased to have the opportunity to receive a comprehensive briefing on this project in advance of public consultation, and we are delighted to offer our whole-hearted support for the ambition of the regeneration effort, the process being adopted, and the outline concepts being mooted.

Newport has the opportunity to lead other Welsh cities into more visionary, strategic thinking about how to restructure the urban environment in a way appropriate to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and there is much of interest in the masterplan as it is emerging. The key positive points as we see them are as follows.

In terms of process:

- the decision to appoint a design champion at Board level in the URC;
- the strengthening of local authority design expertise and provision of access to an appropriate multi disciplinary consultancy team to support the masterplanning;
- the undertaking of full public consultation and debate on the shaping of the city centre;
- the recognition that the first built projects need to set a high standard of design for others to follow, benchmarking the quality of development expected in the new Newport;
- the recognition of the desirability of converting the masterplan/planning strategy into adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance to provide an effective framework for implementation.

In terms of the substance of the masterplan

- the rethinking of the movement network in Newport, and the emphasis on a stronger north-south link on the western side of the river;
- the proposals to civilise the road system immediately to the east of the town centre by removing the elevated roundabout and slip roads;
- the proposals to exploit the river banks as a focus for new development with new public open space, promenades and connected parklands;
- the proposals to create a new campus for the University between the town centre and the river, which we see as a major vitalising and diversifying force for the city centre;
- the strong emphasis upon a quality public realm that is well connected, traffic calmed and consistently treated in a locally distinctive way.

We would like to see:

- A complete re-thinking of the shopping centre as currently designed to ensure greater east-west permeability, and especially a better orientation to potential development sites to the west;
- More consideration given to the historic fabric of Newport by reasserting and extending existing conservation designations to ensure the protection of the town's significant visual and heritage qualities.
- Linking of the park system back into open countryside with the opportunity taken to provide ecological corridors.

The Commission will be interested to see the results of the public consultation and the way it is intended to take on board the main findings of this exercise. We will maintain close contact with Newport Unlimited in order to continue to act as a "critical friend" and to support efforts to maintain and realise the aspiration expressed in current proposals.

END