

<b>Comisiwn Dylunio Cymru</b>	<b>Design Commission for Wales</b>
<b>Design Review Report:</b>	<b>11 August 2004</b>
<b>Meeting Date / Material Submitted:</b>	<b>5 August 2004</b>
<b>Location:</b>	<b>Deiniol Rd, Bangor</b>
<b>Planning / Design Team:</b>	<b>Morbaine Ltd John Parle Barris Liptrot Jon Mendoza</b>
<b>Architect:</b>	<b>FJ Architects Simon Jones</b>
<b>Client:</b>	<b>Deiniol Developments</b>
<b>Scheme Description:</b>	<b>Food retail store</b>
<b>Public/Other Body:</b>	<b>Gwynedd County Council Hywel Thomas</b>
<b>Planning Status:</b>	<b>Outline permission exists</b>
<b>Panel Members:</b>	
<b>John Punter, Chair</b>	<b>Howard Wainwright,</b>
<b>Cindy Harris, Officer</b>	<b>Lyn Owen,</b>
<b>Jonathan Adams,</b>	<b>Ed Colgan,</b>
<b>Richard Weston,</b>	<b>Alan Francis,</b>
<b>Carole-Anne Davies, CEO (observing)</b>	

**Presentation:**

The site of this proposed development sits in the bottom of the valley below the northern end of the town centre to the east, and opening out on to Deiniol Road and the campus of the University to the west. Some two hundred yards to the north is the railway station. The context is varied ranging from six storey university buildings to two storey residential terraces. The site is overlooked from the hills on both sides of town but particularly from the south east. Currently the home of Bangor City football club, the site also contains a health clinic, Masonic hall and children's nursery. All are due to be relocated by the developers and all prospective relocations have gained the necessary planning consents.

The site access was determined at outline planning stage. The main vehicular access will be off Deiniol Road / Sackville Road, opposite the University, with a service access off Farrar Road (the latter was the entrance to the football stadium). Pedestrian access will be from Deiniol Road to the west and from the High Street to the east via a dedicated pedestrian route in an alley. The main entrance to the store will be from the west via a two storey glazed concourse, incorporating a café/restaurant and intended to be a lively, active, well lit space.

The design takes full advantage of the topography of the site. It allows 70 per cent of the car parking to be located under the store, while its height protrudes very little above the residential buildings on Deiniol or Farrar Roads. The landscaping is located all around the edges of the site and some mature trees are preserved around the vehicular entrance on Deiniol Road.

Contrasting materials are used to break up the expansive facades. These include a plinth and some walls clad in waste slate from local quarries, aluminium framed blue-tinted glazing, and flat and ribbed composite panels in light and dark grey. The asymmetric curved roof form reduces the eaves height and features continuous barrel vault rooflights.

The local planning authority are content with these proposals even though the proposed sales area has increased from 65000 to 75000 sq ft. They have been persuaded that traffic flow will not be adversely affected and that the impact of the roofscape on the view of the city centre from surrounding higher ground will not be overly intrusive.

### **Panel's Response**

The Panel was impressed at the ingenious siting of this large building on such a small site. However, they expressed concern that pedestrian links and desire lines had not been adequately addressed. There is a lack of clarity as to the direction of the pedestrian route from High Street which disappears once it enters the site, and fails to connect to the store entrance and, equally importantly, to the pedestrian crossing on Deiniol Road. The developers are currently negotiating with the chapel to purchase a right of way or alternatively the whole chapel site. This is to be welcomed as major improvement to this pedestrian route is required.

The main vehicular access to the car park from Deiniol Road appears convoluted and not clearly legible. The bus route running through the car parking area to the north may be unnecessary and will certainly add to traffic congestion. This should be reviewed very carefully to try to get a more elegant solution.

There was consensus amongst the Panel that the glazed concourse should be brought forward much closer to Deiniol Road to give the superstore a presence on this important thoroughfare. This could be achieved simply by rotating the entrance concourse by 90 degrees. If the frontage to Deiniol Road could be given a more pedestrian orientation with more generous public space and stronger landscape, with the disabled car parking made more discrete or better still relocated, this would also be a great improvement. The front access ramp could be made into more of a feature, particularly if it has to be lengthened to meet disabled access gradients.

The boundaries and edges of the site should be further refined and landscaped so as to mitigate the effects of increased sound and light on neighbouring properties. [It is a planning condition that amenities for local residents be protected.]

The roof form and finish will be critical to the way that the building sits in the wider townscape of the town. The Panel strongly recommend consideration of a 'green' or growing roof cover, using shallow-rooting, drought-tolerant plants such as sedums, to improve the sustainability performance of the building and to reflect the site's former use and appearance as a football ground. Failing that, a non-reflective sheet metal finish, such as zinc or stainless steel, might be considered.

The inclusion of roof glazing was greatly welcomed, and the curve of the roof was considered to be an elegant and appropriate solution.

The generous ceiling height in the car park of four metres aroused positive comment and this should facilitate natural ventilation.

## Summary

This is the best supermarket scheme on an urban site that DCFW has considered to date. They commend the developer and designer for a serious attempt to introduce design quality into the scheme and to defer to the context.

The Panel would like to see a re-working of the east/west pedestrian access across the northern part of the site. The main entrance and concourse building should be simplified and brought forward to meet Deiniol Road and address the university buildings and the proposed square directly opposite. The entrance to the car park should be simplified as much as possible, and the bus loop on to the site could be dispensed with to this end. Any car parking adjacent to the main road should be screened with landscaping. The landscaping needs a more convincing treatment overall with more mature trees the length of Deiniol Road.

The Panel strongly recommend the inclusion of a 'green' roof (as on the Sainsbury, Greenwich foodstore) which would be most appropriate given the fact that the scheme is overlooked from other parts of the town. It would also be a very positive environmental statement by the company, in support of Wales's Sustainable Development requirements. The simplicity of the roof curve has our full support and the retention of roof glazing is considered essential.

With these refinements the Panel feel that this supermarket could be an exemplar building that would generate much favourable publicity for all concerned.

End