

Statws/Status:

Cyhoeddus (Public)



**Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio:
Design Review Report:**

9 February 2005

**Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd:
Meeting Date / Material Submitted:**

2 February 2005

Lleoliad/Location:

Ridgway Park Road, Newport

**Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun
Scheme Description:**

Residential

**Ymgynghorwyr Cynllunio:
Planning Consultants:**

**RPS:
[Jonathan Orton, Helen**

Marsden]

**Cleient/Asiant:
Client/Agent:**

**Bovis Homes:
[Alan Cook; Malcolm Gilmore]**

**Awdurdod Cynllunio:
Planning Authority:**

**Newport City Council:
[Roger Richards]**

**Statws Cynllunio:
Planning Status:**

**Second application submitted.
Appeal pending**

Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel:

**John Punter (cadeirydd/chair)
Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer)
Douglas Hogg**

**Lyn Owen
Ed Colgan
Kieren Morgan**

Sylwedyddion/Observers:

**Gillian Wulff
Peter Roberts**

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

The proposal is for a residential development of 63 units situated about one mile northwest of Newport City Centre. The site is approximately 1 hectare in size and rises steeply towards the north where it looks out across open space and to the open country to the north. It is bounded on the east side by Ridgeway Close and bisected by Ridgeway Park Road, which runs through the site east to west. The area in which this proposal lies has in the past been home to an extensive development of prefabricated housing. To the east of the site, an area of prefabricated housing remains, some of which has been rebuilt and some of which is currently undergoing renewal. To the west of the site lies an area of fairly substantial 1½-2 storey suburban dwellings. This site therefore is a transition zone between the forms of development on either side.

The design of the scheme aims to exploit the topography, offers a variety in house design and dwelling type, and attempts to make an attractive transition between the contrasting forms of development on either side. The majority of the units are 2 and 3 bedroom flats. This mix is considered appropriate as it addresses the need for smaller affordable dwellings, for which there is a recognised demand in Newport. The architectural approach is deliberately conservative in order to minimise residents' objections. The proposed density is 61 units/hectare and there is no specific Local Authority guidance on this matter. Parking is provided in line with the Council's standards. Existing trees and vegetation will be retained and enhanced with native species and a full landscape scheme will be submitted.

Outline permission for residential development on this site was granted in 2001 and extended to 2007. A reserved matters application was submitted around a year ago and this received considerable opposition from the local residents and Councillors. As a result, the application was withdrawn and the current consultant team was employed to try and resolve the design concerns raised. A reserved matters application was lodged in June 2004 and is now the subject of an appeal because of non-determination. A second application has since been submitted in an attempt to rectify all concerns and to take into account the putative reasons for refusal. It is this application that DCfW has been asked to comment upon. The appeal is now held in abeyance until the current application is determined.

The local Planning Authority were unable to attend this review but submitted comments stating that their main concerns are

- Overdevelopment of the site and lack of amenity space - in particular three storey buildings are not considered appropriate
- The proposal fails to provide adequate visibility splays, adequate parking and sufficient turning space, to the detriment of highway safety

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

The Panel recognises the design challenge posed by the residents' response to the original proposals and the contrasting forms of the surrounding development.

The Panel is disappointed that the Planning Authority have allowed piecemeal development to take place in the vicinity when there was clearly an opportunity to prepare a Development/Design Brief for this site and that to the east, which would have allowed the comprehensive redevelopment of the area to be achieved.

The Panel does not consider that the proposed density is too high. This site is seen to be in a sustainable location, with a good range of services and facilities within easy walking distance, and a large tract of open space to the north. There is a bus service through the site and though it is not very frequent this development may facilitate its improvement. The Panel considers that the development potential of the site should be maximised within the constraints imposed by adjacent residential properties.

The Panel notes that no. 24 Ridgeway Close could not be incorporated into the scheme and considers it important that the amenities of the occupant are safeguarded. However, the way in which the proposal respects the privacy of the existing dwelling, allowing 21 metres from the surrounding development, and accommodates provision for access, is considered satisfactory.

The location of the housing fronting onto the open space is welcomed. The Panel feels that the provision of a direct footpath link to, and overlooking of, the open space will encourage it to be used and enhance its safety. However, we feel that a hedgerow boundary treatment would provide a softer and more natural transition to the space than the walls and railings proposed, whilst still allowing overlooking.

While the Panel commends in principle the siting of the dwellings fronting onto Allt-Yr-Yn Avenue, in contrast to the development to the east, we suggest setting these dwellings back, in line with the rear fencing of the adjoining properties. This would create an optimal solution and one to which there could be no reasonable objection. This change would allow the design team to provide a more unified design across the northern edge of the site, and to incorporate their proposed flats more successfully into the frontage, extending the well-worked solution at the western end facing the open space. We note that fenestration has been removed from east facing gables on the flats to avoid overlooking the properties to the east.

At 17-26 Ridgeway Close where the new housing will overlook single storey dwellings the Panel would prefer to see the housing reduced to two storeys and the massing of the blocks reduced slightly in scale. We would also like to see the stepping down of the units to the south reconsidered, to give a more elegant solution with less exposed gables, but we can see the difficulties of achieving this. Elsewhere on the site the Panel considers that the scheme respects the amenities of existing residents very carefully and produces a set of streetscapes which are consistent with the locality and attractive in their own right. The density, site planning, landscaping and amenity are all considered to be very good.

The Panel welcomes the use of varied house designs, contrasting interior paving and quality landscaping, and stresses the need to ensure that this concern with detail is consistently applied right the way through to construction.

Crynodeb/Summary

Overall the Panel are sympathetic to the problems experienced by the developer and find the current proposals to be an intelligent response to a difficult site, which deals with the issues of topography and context in an appropriate manner. In particular:

- We support the residential intensification and mix of house types proposed for this site.

- We consider the treatment of both Ridgeway Park Road and upper Ridgeway Close achieves a sympathetic form of development which responds well to the surrounding context
- The way in which the development fronts on to the Public Open Space is welcomed and the architectural treatment commended.
- We are pleased to see the preservation of existing trees and the new landscaping included within the scheme, although we would like to see a hedgerow boundary treatment on the properties facing the open space
- We suggest that the three units fronting Allt-Yr-Yn Avenue could be set back to the level of the boundary wall of the adjoining development, to offer a consistent building line to the street. This is something of a counsel of perfection but it would improve the street scene.
- In a similar vein, we would prefer to see the height and massing of plots 17-26 Ridgeway Close rethought and reduced to two storeys, to decrease its visual impact and overlooking of the single storey properties opposite.
- Overall, we consider this scheme to be a very careful response to the locality and one that will provide a high quality living environment. The two changes we suggest would in our view remove any possible objection to this scheme on design grounds.

Diwedd/End

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