

**Statws/Status:**

**Cyhoeddus / Public**



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

**10 March 2005**

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

**2 March 2005**

**Lleoliad/Location:**

**Cardigan town centre**

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

**Retail with residential**

**Ymgynghorwyr Cynllunio:  
Planning Consultants:**

**DPP [Gary Sutton]**

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

**Eatonfield Holdings  
[Rob Lloyd, Keith Mather]**

**Pensaer/Architect:**

**John Taylor**

**Public Body:**

**WDA [Ian Higgs; Paul Evans]**

**Awdurdod Cynllunio:  
Planning Authority:**

**Ceredigion CC  
[Fiona Edwards]**

**Statws Cynllunio:  
Planning Status:**

**Planning application  
submitted**

**Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel:**

**Alan Francis (cadeirydd/chair)  
Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer)  
Nigel Hanson**

**Wendy Hall  
Howard Wainwright  
Douglas Hogg**

**Sylwedyddion/Observers:**

**Gillian Wulff  
Peter Roberts**

## **Cyflwyniad/Presentation**

The current scheme is the result of five years' work between the developer, the architect and the WDA. It has progressed through many different versions, all of which have emphasised good accessibility, north/south through the scheme. Initially the intention was to retain the Woolworth store on the High Street, but it has now been decided to move this to the south west corner of the new development on Morgan Street. The store for agricultural goods and the bike shop, currently on Pwllhai, will also be relocated on Morgan Street. The main pedestrian entrance to the central mall or open street, from the High Street, will be a statement without dominating the surrounding buildings. The proposed retail units will be larger than those currently available in Cardigan and this is seen as commercially necessary. Residential units are located on two storeys above the retail, and the roofline is broken up and castellated to reduce the apparent massing. Two decks of car parking are provided below ground floor to meet the Local Authority's requirements for 120 spaces. A lower part of the old town wall which runs down the centre of the site will be exposed behind glazing and illuminated within the basement car park.

The initial views of Ceredigion County Council are that the regeneration of the town centre is welcome in principle, but that this historic section of the town must be treated with great sensitivity; any development must respect the listed buildings on the periphery of the site, and the historic character of Cardigan in general. In particular, the development should not turn its back on Chancery Lane, which the Council hope to see re-animated by increased retail and cafe use. The site has been designated by the Environment Agency as C2 and therefore at risk from flooding, and the Agency are likely to object to residential use on this basis. The police have expressed concern at any restrictions on access to their garage on Pwllhai for emergency vehicles. Altogether, the Council are looking for fundamental changes to the proposals. It was noted that no revised front elevation onto the High Street has been submitted to the Council.

Ceredigion County Council have just commissioned a desk top archaeological study, which predicts the need for trial digging and further archaeological investigation either side of the old town wall.

## **Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response**

The Panel expressed concern about the large scale of the development and about the high blank facades to Pwllhai and Chancery Lane. The large picture windows to the rear of the retail units are likely to be filled with posters and the general aspect at street level appears hostile and forbidding. The only degree of animation is the entrances to the residential units located on Chancery Lane.

The height of the development remains constant at the level of the High Street with steps at the far end, even though the ground drops away towards the south east. This decision has been driven by economics and the need to accommodate two levels of basement car parking. The roofline would benefit from being reduced in height and should be less acutely angular – with duo pitches replacing mono pitches. The current massing appears bulky and overbearing.

The Panel considers it essential to introduce more permeability into the scheme. The existing frontages on each of the long sides are not acceptable from an urban design perspective, which seeks to maximise useful public open space, animated streets and a sense of place.

Alternatives to the central mall were discussed, such as developing a series of plots facing the street, which would increase footfall down Pwllhai and Chancery Lane. The mall should not be allowed to flourish at the expense of the surrounding streets and buildings. Another suggestion involved bringing the residential units down to the ground, to encourage a more animated street frontage. It was pointed out that Chancery Lane is not a retail street at the

moment, although the local authority is looking to increase its vitality and there are currently applications being considered which would help to do that. The positive improvement of the public realm remains a key concern; Pwllhai and Chancery Lane should be retained and developed as open and attractive routes through the town.

The use of local materials would be particularly important in a scheme of this kind – for example Cardigan originally had its own brickworks, and brick is an important part of the local vernacular.

In general terms the Panel questioned the concept for this scheme and thought that its consistent floor levels, general massing and rigid adherence to a 'central mall' might be flawed. However, we recognised that the Local Authority's car parking requirements may be at the root of this, as the site is probably too small and sensitive to absorb two floors of car parking without leading to unacceptable building levels and overall massing. The developer advised that the scheme is yet to confirm its viability. The Panel wondered whether the extent of accommodation proposed, and the consequent complexity of the scheme, was influencing this and whether a simpler scheme with less residential (some of which might be brought down to street level) might not prove equally profitable

### **Crynodeb/Summary**

The Panel supports the idea of mixed use development in this area of the town. We appreciate the efforts that have been made to break down the roofscape and reduce the massing. However, we recommend that the following fundamental points are addressed in future design development:

- The layout has inherent weaknesses which will be difficult to overcome without a fundamental rethink of the concept of the internal mall
- The scale of the development on Pwllhai and Chancery Lane should be reviewed, and fully active frontages introduced.
- The permeability of the scheme should be improved and east/west links developed
- The height and massing should be further reduced overall and especially adjacent to existing side streets
- Improvements to the public realm particularly on Pwllhai and Chancery Lane should be an integral part of the scheme.
- The overall design style bears little relationship in scale, proportion and materials, to the existing vernacular architecture of Cardigan. A review of the existing fabric and historic development of the town must guide the design response and treatment of this site
- The local authority needs to reconsider its parking policy in relation to this site to help reduce the massing of the scheme and bring the public realm back more closely to existing street levels

We would welcome the opportunity to comment on this scheme again at a future stage, and consider it extremely important that a dialogue be established and maintained between all parties.

### **Diwedd/End**

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