

Statws/Status:

Cyhoeddus / Public



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

13 April 2005

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

6 April 2005

Lleoliad/Location:

New Street, Mold

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

**20 Residential 1&2 bed
apartments**

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

Prestigious Lifestyle

Pensaer/Architect:

DWA Architects [Ed English]

**Awdurdod Cynllunio:
Planning Authority:**

**Flintshire County Council
[Peter Jones-Hughes]**

**Statws Cynllunio:
Planning Status:**

Full application submitted

Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel:

**Alan Francis (cadeirydd/chair)
Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer)
John Punter**

**Howard Wainwright
Ewan Jones**

Sylwedyddion/Observers:

**Gillian Wulff
Peter Roberts**

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

This proposal is for a residential development comprising 20 one- and two- bedroom apartments. The site is situated on the western fringe of the town centre, within a Conservation Area. Directly opposite the site lies the Bethesda Chapel which is a grade II* listed building and is classical in style. The remaining surrounding development consists mainly of typical nineteenth century terraces, some of which have retail at ground floor, and 1960's retail development. In order to rectify the problems in the existing consent, a further scheme has been produced and an application has been submitted. Since the submission of the revised application, the architect has been replaced and the current architect instructed to produce coloured elevations only, to date.

The site is 0.13 hectares in size and has extant permission for 18 dwellings. This permission, however, has vehicular access from the service yard of the adjacent retail properties, which is inappropriate and unlikely to succeed. The Highways Department has ruled out access from New Street. The approved scheme also permits two retail units which the Town Centre Manager has since advised would not be viable.

This proposal is in the form of a T-shape fronting New Street, with bays of car parking located off Meadow Place. Access is taken from Meadow Place, a one-way street running north from New Street. Amenity space for the apartments is provided to the east of the site. The height of the building facing New Street rises from 2 to 2½ storeys in the middle. The main bulk of the building is at the rear of the site where it reaches 3 storeys in height.

The Planning Authority stated that they see no objection in principal to a modern development if something of quality that responds to the context could be achieved. In terms of car parking the Council accept that 100% provision is not required in a location such as this and provision as low as 50% would be acceptable. The Planning Authority stressed the need for a Conservation Area consent for the demolition of the existing building on the site and would hope to see this with any future application.

It is the view of both the Council and newly appointed architect that amendments need to be made to the current proposal. A comprehensive contextual analysis is recognised to be missing from the proposal as it stands.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

The Panel recognises the difficult position of the newly appointed architect, who has had little influence on the design as it stands. We also acknowledge the fact that until recently there has been no Case Officer and in the future we would encourage closer working between the architect and planners in order to result in a better scheme.

The key constraint on the design of the current proposal is the lack of contextual analysis which should inform the design. The Panel sees this as a critical factor in the creation of a scheme that both reflects and responds to the local context, as is required in this location.

The Panel considers that securing a suitable vehicular access to the site is key to its successful design. It was suggested that access could be secured by allowing two way traffic for access purposes only on Meadow Place, if the remaining portion of the street (from the site access down to New Street) were pedestrianised. A turning circle could be incorporated in Meadow Place on land in the Council's control. It is considered that this access arrangement would

allow one point of access to the site and thus protect the character of the street. The Panel consider that everything possible should be done to achieve this route of access as this is a key factor in maintaining the tight urban grain and character of the Conservation Area. The relatively constricted entrance to Meadow Place from New Street should be retained. The Council agreed to initiate this and do not need any further information from the architect to do so.

This new access arrangement would open up the opportunity to create a perimeter or L-shape building fronting New Street, with parking and amenity space provided at the rear. This would enable the intimate street form of Meadow Place to be maintained and enhanced and would avoid creating a car-dominated environment.

The Panel considers that there may be the opportunity to create a slightly taller element to the scheme, should the critical mass of the developer's requirements and the site require it. This may be acceptable at the corner of New Street and Meadow Place, providing that the new development frames the view of the Chapel down Meadow Place. It is considered acceptable if the heights of the buildings on either side of Meadow Place do not match, as long as the tight grain and character of the area is maintained.

We consider that a comprehensive townscape study should be undertaken to establish the predominant local roofscape, building widths, building heights and pitched roof angles. This will allow a design to be developed that will achieve a less awkward roof form and which will better fit the context in which it sits.

The Panel stresses the importance of the inclusion of sustainable development from the outset and encourages future designs to address issues of sustainability in terms of materials used (particularly as the proposed use of lead is not sustainable) and energy performance.

The Panel were keen to discover whether there was a requirement on the developer to provide a degree of affordable housing within the scheme, but the Council confirmed that due to the size of this proposal and the fact that permission already exists, no affordable housing requirement would be called for.

Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel considers that, whether through a new or amended application, which is dependant on the Planning Authority's preference, the following issues should be addressed in order to improve the scheme:

- A comprehensive contextual analysis should be undertaken, with particular reference to the rear and sides of the site, to aid the design process and allow the proposal to respond to and reflect the local character and distinctiveness of Mold.
- A complete re-design of the proposal should be undertaken to incorporate those issues identified through the contextual analysis.
- The Local Planning Authority should fully explore the possibility of gaining access to the site from the north of Meadow Place. This is considered key to the successful redevelopment of the site and the Panel urges the Highways Engineers to do everything within their remit to make this possible.
- A comprehensive study of the roof pitches, building depths and massing in the area should be undertaken, so as to avoid the uncomfortable roof design and bulky form seen on the current proposal.

- Issues of sustainable development should be considered and a revised proposal should include consideration of a sustainable design strategy. The use of lead in large quantities as a sheet roof material is not recommended.

We would welcome the opportunity to see and comment on this scheme again as the design development progresses.

Diwedd/End

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