

Statws/Status:

Cyhoeddus / Public

DESIGN
COMMISSION
FOR WALES
COMISIWN
DYLUNIO
CYMRU

Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: Design Review Report:	17 May 2005
Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd: Meeting Date / Material Submitted:	5 May 2005
Lleoliad/Location:	Central Hotel, Cardiff
Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun Scheme Description:	Residential, leisure
Cleient/Asiant: Client/Agent:	Burleigh Estates [Adam Skinner]
Pensaer/Architect:	Carey Jones Architects [Tim Tolcher, Simon Coles]
Awdurdod Cynllunio: Planning Authority:	Cardiff CC [Viv Williams]
Statws Cynllunio: Planning Status:	Revised scheme submitted
Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel:	
Alan Francis (cadeirydd/chair) Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer) Geraint John Kedrick Davies	Wendy Hall Ewan Jones Phil Roberts Lyn Owen

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

The developer has taken on board the comments made in the last Design Review report on this scheme in March 2005. This has resulted in the appointment of a new design team, to bring fresh thinking to the proposals while keeping the material aspects of the application intact. The new team challenged the 'red line' approach

of the previous design which was wedded to the footprint of the existing building, and have produced a scheme with a more symmetrical footprint. The service core has been relocated to the middle of the building and the central atrium is no longer part of the scheme. This arrangement offers more internal space than previously, with two bands of apartments either side of the core, and two south facing apartments at each level, with generous balconies stepped back from the fifth floor compensating for the proximity of the railway line. East and west facing balconies are flush with the facade, while north facing balconies over the main entrance follow the bull nose curve of the new footprint. The mix of apartments has changed slightly, with the majority being two bed. The internal arrangement of the Sports Cafe also shows a more efficient use of space.

The elevations now have a more appropriate solid/void proportion. A predominantly stone façade forms a gridwork of slots filled with glazing and terracotta cladding. The glazing to the Sports Cafe has been separated to reflect the two storey space internally. The massing shows greater height to the front of the building with a stronger presence facing the city centre, and a rhythmical stepping back to the south where the elevation is dominated by open terraces and greenery.

The semi-basement parking area has been retained, including a plant room for the whole block and cellar space for the cafe/restaurant, accessed via stairs to Penarth Road. The main entrance to the residential units is also from Penarth Road which has increased pavement space. Disabled access is from St Mary Street or a lift from the car park.

The local authority representative expressed reservations about the location of the disabled access. The stone cladding, whether natural or reconstituted, should be of high quality. Doubt was expressed about the metal louvres to the edge of the staggered balconies on the east and west elevations.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

The Panel welcomed the revised proposals for this landmark site. This is a stronger scheme than the previous one and we find the current massing more appropriate. The southern elevation responds well to its aspect and has therefore received a different treatment. We are less convinced that the trees as shown on the drawings can be grown without a substantial soil depth, or that sufficient attention has been given to the prevailing south west wind and its effect on the microclimate. There is a huge opportunity here to maximise the use of environmental technologies such as green roofs, passive and active solar systems, and natural ventilation. We shared the Council's reservations concerning the metal louvres forming triangular infills at the balcony edges, which will reduce solar access morning and evening, and we suggested they be stepped down and possibly continued in stonework.

Some doubts were expressed about the facade, which does not appear to be based on a structural rationale, nor to reflect the particular uses behind it. There were differing opinions as to whether some reference should be made to the historic and distinctive random stonework present on the existing building and the building opposite.

The Panel felt that the large sloping soffit over the main entrance doors was a bold proposal which might be successful, but which required further attention and design development. The roof line on top of the duplex apartment is rather weak.

It should be treated either as a pavilion on top of the building, or as a capping to the block as a whole. There is an apparent conflict between the smooth solid verticality of the east and west facades, and the horizontal emphasis formed by the open balconies to the north. It was suggested that the facade could be a more contemporary shiny material rather than stone, given the prominent landmark position and the symmetry of the form.

The location of the disabled access was questioned, being separated from the main access and next to the refuse store. At the same time, the location of the main access from Penarth Road was considered less than ideal, because of its proximity to hostels and the large number of people in this area during major sporting events. The Panel suggested locating and integrating both pedestrian entrances on St Mary Street, with all services including refuse collection and storage, on Penarth Road. This would improve security, although some A3 space may be lost. It was acknowledged that there was an inconsistency on the drawings regarding direct access from the basement to the street at this point. An alternative to the revolving doors to the cafe would need to be provided for disabled users. A fire fighting lift arrangement and cycle storage should be included.

Given the extended width of the pavement on Penarth Road, the Panel would like to see plans for public realm improvement. It was stated that at least there should be consistency of hard landscaping and this could be conditioned by the local authority.

The Panel recommended that the designer try to achieve an Eco-Homes 'Excellent' rating for this scheme, especially given the good solar orientation, and advised that this can be done within normal cost constraints while offering distinct market benefits. The designer was asked to consider the feasibility of a centralised heating system, which would be more efficient and amenable to the use of low-carbon fuels, rather than individual systems.

Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel consider that these proposals form the basis of an improved scheme, and we appreciate the simpler plan and more efficient use of space. We accept the principle of redevelopment on this site, rather than pursuing the previous consent for refurbishment. We think that these are the issues which remain to be resolved:

- The main access to the residential units, including disabled access, should be relocated on St Mary Street - effectively swapping around the ramp and stairs
- All servicing should be from Penarth Road. The basement layout and servicing access need further refining.
- The 'rising prow' above the main retail entrance will need very careful handling if it is to be successful.
- Similarly, the horizontality of the north facing balconies needs resolving with the verticality of the east and west facades
- The triangular infills to the sides of the south facing balconies should be revised in terms of their profile and materials
- The roofline of the top duplex apartment requires further resolution
- Plans for the landscaping of the enlarged public realm should be included in these proposals, and minimum improvements conditioned by the local authority

- Deciduous planting, providing shading on the south facing balconies, could be installed by the developer and would be more appropriate than trees in planters.
- Environmental technologies should be incorporated in the south facade and an 'Eco-Homes' Excellent rating should be achieved. The short and medium term benefits of a centralised heating system should be evaluated.

Diwedd/End

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