

Statws/Status:

Cyhoeddus (Public)

DESIGN
COMMISSION
FOR WALES

COMISIWN
DYLUNIO
CYMRU

Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: Design Review Report:	16 Mehefin 2005 16 June 2005
Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd: Meeting Date / Material Submitted:	1 Mehefin 2005 1 June 2005
Lleoliad/Location:	Penarth, nr Cardiff
Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun Scheme Description:	GM2 House, Residential 2nd Review
Ymgynghorwyr Cynllunio: Planning Consultants:	N/A
Client/Agent Cleient/Asiant:	Grant Maunder, Beverley Thomas, GM2
Pensaer/Architect:	Stephen Hill, Holder Mathias
Awdurdod Cynllunio: Planning Authority:	Vale of Glamorgan Robert Thomas, Nick Lloyd Jane Crofts
Statws Cynllunio: Planning Status:	Application submitted
Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel:	
John Punter (cadeirydd/chair); Carole-Anne Davies, CEO (swyddog/officer) Douglas Hogg, Wendy Hall, Ewan Jones, Phil Roberts	
Lead: Ewan Jones	
Sylwedyddion/Observers:	Gillian Wulff Peter Roberts Steve Pritchard, ABP

Cyflwyniad/Presentation:

The Panel welcomed this second presentation of a revised scheme of only five storeys. A nine storey scheme had been previously reviewed by DCFW in May 2004. A planning application had been submitted for the current scheme in October and had been the subject of five meetings between architect and planning authority.

This site is on the northern edge of the Plymouth Road Conservation Area which is predominantly residential, and adjacent to the Penarth Railway Station. A two storey office building occupies the site which overlooks the station forecourt where the road widens considerably. It is very much a transitional site on the outer edge of the town centre to the east, and there is considerable intensification of uses proceeding in the vicinity.

All parties are eager to find a design solution for a development which respects its surroundings. A key issue is scale and massing and a contemporary solution is welcomed. However, sensitive treatment is required in relation to the residential conservation area of Plymouth Road and adjacent retired persons housing. The treatment of the base and upper floors, their detailing, and the choice and colour of materials are all of critical importance on this site.

The main points raised in the discussions with the planning authority relate to the height, scale and massing of the five storey proposal and the pivotal relationships established with the conservation area and the retirement home to the south, with the views of the building from the west across the station west, and the rear of the Washington Gallery and the edge of the town centre to the north.

The revised scheme is reduced in scale, although still in excess of that in the planning guidance. Curves have been introduced into the eastern façade to assist the relationship with the first house on Plymouth Road, and have now been carried around to the northern façade of the building to increase the coherence of the design. A circular escape staircase provides a feature on the north side alongside the entrance to the apartments.

The proposal has been stepped back on the fourth storey on the south side to give the retirement home more privacy and light. Live/work units and a single commercial unit have been introduced to the ground floor to provide active frontages to the street above a semi-basement car park. The floor plate has been increased in size to deliver the 25 apartments that are considered to be the minimum number to allow development to proceed. The architectural treatment suggests more solidity and a greater solid to void relationship on the first three floors, but a more lightweight and transparent form for the top two storeys. A white render finish is preferred by the architects but the planners are not convinced that this is appropriate in this location and have asked for different materials and colours to be considered.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response:

The Panel welcome the direction in which the scheme has moved particularly the reduction in height. They have no objection to the building filling the site and are pleased to see almost all the car parking accommodated in semi-basement car parking.

The Panel were concerned about the lack of detailed material submitted for the review, including the absence of elevational sections showing the relationship to surrounding buildings and details of materials. It was explained that the architect wanted to get the Panel's view on the basic envelope proposed before the detailed design resumed.

There was some concern that the curve and the internal plan were beginning to conflict and that there were now four different elevational treatments combined with different degrees of set back on the upper floors. It was felt that the design was in danger of losing its cohesion and integrity and that there may be too great a variety of elevational treatments for a single building.

There were particular concerns that detailing of the curves could not be achieved successfully without special fenestration and curved glass. It was considered that the expense of this might prejudice the equal need for quality materials on this pivotal building. It was suggested that the design might be simplified so that it was easy to build, and so that the palette of materials and finishes could be of a guaranteed quality that would stand the test of time. The Panel did not consider the extra floor added to the Washington Gallery building to be a good precedent, although white render would be acceptable on this scheme if well executed.

Some concerns were raised about internal layout of apartments, their depth and the lack of daylight penetration obliging artificial lighting in some areas. This was considered to need attention in relation to the marketability of the scheme. The architect was confident that the deeper floor plans could provide a choice of living environments and would work well.

The Panel then raised sustainability issues. Despite the other constraints of the site it was recognised that reasonable use has been made of sun orientation and daylight. It was suggested that serious consideration be given to passive ventilation, green roofs and solar panels and that an energy strategy should be developed for the building. Consideration should also be given to sourcing local, renewable materials and the preferred design should be life cycle costed. The Panel would have preferred to see greater detail on sun paths and overshadowing.

In relation to the public realm, the Panel advised that guard rails should be avoided on the ramp as they will detract from the quality of the scheme.

Crynodeb/Summary

The panel endorsed the following aspects of the design:

- The five and a half storey height
- The building footprint which virtually fills the site
- The curved floor plan of the first three floors which should be treated as a unit
- The active ground floor frontages
- The semi basement car parking
- The set back of the upper floors particularly to protect the privacy of residents to the south
- The upper floor balconies which further animate the building.

The panel's two main concerns centre on sustainability and detailing

- Sustainability is a key issue and more work is required here. Sedum roof treatment may be appropriate and solar panels should be investigated as part of an energy efficiency strategy for the building that should be considered from the outset of the detailed design.
- Detailing needs to be first class on what will be a very prominent building in a sensitive location. The shape of the building needs careful attention to deliver purity and consistency of form at the base, and to ensure that the two upper floors and their balconies respond to this sinuosity.
- The Panel is also keen to ensure that the curved form can be delivered economically and to a high quality. It is concerned that the curved glazing can be afforded and considers it likely that straight glass may have to be used and faceted, and that this should be clearly shown on the drawings.
- Quality materials are also of critical importance. The Panel considered that the building could be white render and treated as a reinterpretation of the International Style, and that this would be acceptable if done well. There was the opportunity to use coloured panels to complement this approach if desired, with the colour chosen carefully to complement the context. The Panel did not wish to be prescriptive about this.

Diwedd/End

A Welsh language copy of this report is available on request.