

**Statws/Status:**

**Cyhoeddus / Public**

DESIGN  
COMMISSION  
FOR WALES  
COMISIWN  
DYLUNIO  
CYMRU

<b>Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: Design Review Report:</b>	<b>September 2005</b>
<b>Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd: Meeting Date / Material Submitted:</b>	<b>7 September 2005</b>
<b>Lleoliad/Location:</b>	<b>Blackwood</b>
<b>Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun Scheme Description:</b>	<b>New bus station</b>
<b>Cleient/Asiant: Client/Agent:</b>	<b>CCBC [Stewart Smith, Alan Dallimore]</b>
<b>Pensaer/Architect:</b>	<b>CCBC [Geraint Jones]</b>
<b>Cynllunio/Consultants:</b>	<b>Capita Symonds [Carl Woods]</b>
<b>Awdurdod Cynllunio: Planning Authority:</b>	<b>Caerphilly CBC WDA [Clair Dauncey]</b>
<b>Statws Cynllunio: Planning Status:</b>	<b>Application approved with conditions</b>
<b>Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel: Alan Francis (cadeirydd/chair) Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer) Richard Parnaby Phil Roberts</b>	<b>Ewan Jones Ann-Marie Smale Ed Colgan</b>
<b>Lead Panellist:</b>	<b>Ed Colgan</b>
<b>Sylwedyddion/Observers:</b>	<b>Gillian Wulff DCFW</b>

## **Cyflwyniad/Presentation**

This project has arisen because of the poor facilities which exist for public transport in this area, and aims to overcome the problem of local vandalism. The Local Authority as the client appointed Capita as the lead consultant and obtained WDA funding for an improved palette of materials and specifications. The scheme is part of a wider public realm strategy aimed at restoring retail and commercial success to the area, and the consultants who produced the strategy have been included in this design team. They aim to improve the rear of the buildings facing High Street, which will be exposed in the new arrangement and which present a first view of the town for newly arrived passengers.

The town centre site borders the market square on one side and, of the three design options put forward, the option which does not encroach on the square was chosen. An option for re-using the existing buildings was considered, but offered no saving and did not address the problem of level differences. In this scheme the site level will be reduced by 1.5 metres to improve accessibility.

Areas for pedestrian circulation have been prioritised within the layout and kept separate from vehicular circulation. Different materials and colours will emphasise this separation and make patterns of movement legible. A taxi pickup rank and cycle storage are included. A public art strategy is in place and there is space on the central reservation for some kind of art work. A heated waiting area and cafe is provided in a fully glazed triangular area bordering the market square and overlooking the bus bays at ground level. The bays form a staggered line running along the length of an existing retaining wall with a paved and roofed waiting and boarding area. In order to protect the roof canopy, which incorporates some glazing, a three metre high mesh fence will be installed on top of the wall. The mesh is virtually see-through.

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

The Panel recognised the need for improvement of this public transport facility, and welcomed the improved connectivity with the town centre across the market square. Existing provision for 16 disabled parking spaces will be replaced with others more convenient to the town centre, and this is a condition of planning consent.

The design offers good transparency and a dramatic roof form, although the Panel thought that the structural supports should not penetrate through the roof canopy. It was suggested that rainwater discharge, the details of which were not shown, could be enclosed in the structural columns.

The Panel discussed the necessity of the mesh fence, and ways of improving its appearance, such as planting and/or incorporating the fence supports into the roof structure.

The Panel were concerned about the energy strategy for the cafe area - a large heated space which, although well protected from solar overheating, will have substantial heat loss through the glazing. A lobby is incorporated in only one of the two entrances, and the Panel suggested a more consistent approach, or the alternative of having one lobbied entrance in the 'point'. We were told that the

form of heating was not yet decided, or even whether any space heating was deemed necessary. The Panel urged that this issue be resolved as soon as possible so that the design complements the energy performance. In any event, we urged the avoidance of radiators in front of glazed walls. Ventilation from the cafe area should incorporate a heat reclaim device, which could then be used to warm incoming air, and the external impact of any vents needs to be considered. The Panel suggested the use of composite timber/aluminium window frames as a better environmental alternative to pure aluminium.

The relationship with Market Square appears to be compromised by the 'blip' of the entrance lobby/porch and, if it is considered necessary, it should be incorporated into the building or the roof extruded over it. The existing brick walled store should be roofed separately and treated as part of the retaining wall and landscape rather than the bus station.

The quality of materials and junction details will be very important in the overall quality, and issues of cleaning and maintenance should be included in the selection and specification. The Panel thought that some of the colours of the hard surfaces were rather strong and could be toned down. The soffit of the roof overhang will be aluminium sheeting and appear as seamless as possible. It will have a highly reflective finish and be lit with uplighting.

The project will be delivered through a traditional procurement route.

### **Crynodeb/Summary**

The Panel welcomes this improvement to public transport facilities and the commitment to a high quality design and finishes. We applaud the chosen procurement route as the best way of ensuring that quality is maintained. However, the following areas remain to be resolved:

- We would urge the design team to re-examine the mesh fence as a solution to possible vandalism. It may not in fact be an effective deterrent, and it will have a high impact on the residential properties and car park on the other side of the wall.
- If it is to be retained, we suggest that it should be greened and planted, and linked structurally to the bus station
- The environmental control of the enclosed heated area needs to be fully considered and an integrated strategy adopted, including design, insulation and glazing specifications, heating and ventilation
- We would like to see the roof area used for some kind of renewable energy generation
- The colours and detailing of the vehicle bays and other surfaces should be calmed and simplified.
- The Panel consider that the quality of the visual material we were presented with was not adequate to fully evaluate the proposals. It included a lot of unnecessary material and omitted other items which would have been useful, such as section drawings, photomontages and contextual analysis.

**Diwedd/End**

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