

Statws/Status:
Cyhoeddus / Public



Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: 20 January 2006
Design Review Report:

Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd: 11 January 2006
Meeting Date / Material Submitted:

Lleoliad/Location: Cynon Valley,
Mountain Ash

Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun New Hospital
Scheme Description:

Cleient/Asiant: North Glamorgan NHS Trust
Client/Agent: [Geoff Walsh]
Inventures [Dominic Roche]
Welsh Health Estates
[Nigel Davies]

Pensaer/Architect: HLM Architects [David Smith,
Richard O'Neil]

Cynllunio: Ove Arup
Consultants: [Kambiz Ayoubkhani]

Awdurdod Cynllunio: Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC
Planning Authority: [Huw Roberts]

Statws Cynllunio: Outline application submitted
Planning Status:

Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel:
Richard Parnaby (cadeirydd/chair) Phil Roberts
Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer) Kieren Morgan
Elfed Roberts Lyn Owen
Ann-Marie Smale

Lead Panellist:

Kieren Morgan

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

This project is at the stage where an outline business case [OBC] has been completed and it is approaching the full business case [FBC] stage. An architect has already been appointed as this project is not part of the 'All Wales Procurement Initiative'. A site options appraisal identified two options – one being the redevelopment of an existing building in Aberdare; the other a brownfield site in Mountain Ash. Both were presented to the Cynon Valley Forum, as part of the public consultation, and the latter option was chosen. An outline planning application, to include access, has been submitted.

The site is unused and has reverted to grassland. It is slightly contaminated with colliery fill. It is bounded by the A4059 to the north east, by the Afon Cynon to the south and west, and lies opposite Mountain Ash comprehensive school. An existing footbridge over the A4059 road links the two sites. The site is flat and above the flood plain, with a margin of mature trees on the road side and the river edge. It is owned by Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC and measures 5.52 ha. There are two access points from the A4059, but the major one will be to the east, incorporating a new roundabout.

A railway station is close by [within 500 m]. There are bus routes running along the A road to the north and the B road to the south, and some of the latter could possibly be re-routed. A new footbridge is proposed across the river to the south west to facilitate pedestrian access to and from the railway station.

The building form has been generated by departmental adjacencies, as well as the nature of the site. A curved fan form responds to the curve of the river, and secure courtyards open up to the landscape, as part of a strategy which sees the natural environment contributing to the therapeutic healing process.

The design strategy embraces the imperative to build sustainably and is looking to incorporate features such as a biomass CHP system, sustainable drainage, and a ground source heat pump. A sunpath analysis will be used to ensure the blocks are well oriented and the NEAT assessment model will be used to evaluate the design development. Detailed predictions of energy consumption and efficiency will be required for the FBC. Buro Happold have been engaged to work on this aspect.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

The Panel welcomed the Trust's commitment to exceed the NEAT Excellent standard and we would like to see a similar commitment to the AEDET assessment process and the ASPECT toolkit. DCFW would be willing to be involved in the AEDET evaluation process.

The Panel regretted the lack of site or building sections in the presentation material, especially to show how the courtyards relate to the building uses, and we would expect to see these at the next stage. The sunpath and wind study does not show

how the findings will influence the design. There is no mention of rainfall, which is a significant factor.

The site layout and traffic routes appear tortuous. The main vehicular entrance is at the opposite end of site to the main entrance to the building, and is thus not visible to most visitors entering the site who will see the minor [therapies] entrance first. One solution would be to flip the plan and the architect agreed to look at the impact of this on other aspects of the design. At the northern entrance, emergency vehicles entering the site appear to flow against exiting traffic. The disabled parking spaces are relatively far away from the main entrance, and there is no sheltered accessway linking the two. The Panel questioned whether the roundabout was in the right place, or indeed whether it was necessary at all. We were told, however, that its location has been agreed after extensive discussions with the Highways Department and it would be very difficult to change it now. It could not be moved further north as this would be too close to the school junction.

A discussion about the pros and cons of the curved form took place. The Panel thought that the inherent disadvantages [not very adaptable; less easy to construct and manage] meant that the inclusion of the curve had to be positively justified. The architect stated that it did not adversely affect internal space planning and that, as long as the constructor understood the principles, the benefits were a less institutional space, better integration of departments and better views. He insisted that the form would not prejudice future adaptability.

The Panel accepted that the curved form reflects the bend in the river, but pointed out that this made the internal arrangement of some of the first floor wards problematic. We thought that the route to Outpatients was too indirect and recommended that the outpatients department be moved to the ground floor, and the cafe to the first floor, where it could take advantage of views to the south west. It is difficult to judge without sections, but the proposed courtyards seem too small to be effective, well lit, therapeutic spaces.

The Panel regretted that the clear layout and access on the first floor with its spine corridor was not reflected in the ground floor layout, which appears inconsistent and confusing. There are a lot of deep plan areas, with the attendant problems of lack of natural light and ventilation, and overuse of electric lighting and mechanical cooling, which works against the sustainability strategy. The architect stated that those areas with least daylight are mostly support facilities.

The Panel would like to see a re-routed bus link with the site, and good pedestrian links to the south with the railway station, and to the north with the school. The existing footbridge to the north is not well linked into the overall site layout. It was accepted that the proposed new footbridge to the southwest was not well sited and should not appear to offer a direct public route through the entrance foyer. It was agreed that the visual impact of extensive areas of hard surface car parking needed to be addressed.

The Panel welcomed the commitment to sustainability measures, and the maximum possible use of natural ventilation. It was claimed that the building would be 75% self sufficient in daylight. We encouraged the development of local supply chains, and it was agreed that this would be particularly relevant for the availability of biomass fuel.

The current policy on provision of single bed rooms is 50%, but the Trust will ensure flexibility for an extension to 100% in the future.

The Panel was told that an ecologist and landscape specialists were involved, with a brief to retain as much as possible of the natural site features. The landscape strategy has yet to be developed in detail, but the grounds are likely to be zoned, with different levels of protection and openness. Although designated a C2 zone in terms of flood risk, it has been established that the site is above the 'once in a thousand years' flood level and this has been agreed with the Environment Agency.

There will be a two stage procurement process with the architect retained through to detailed design stage.

Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel welcomes the early engagement with the Trust and its designers. We consider the current proposals to be an acceptable response to the brief, but with some major revisions necessary. In particular:

- The site organisation is confusing and dysfunctional. More thought should be given to the location of the main entrance, traffic flows, pedestrian routes and site entrances/exits.
- The quality and clarity of the internal layout is inconsistent and we are not convinced that the use of curved geometry throughout the design offers significant benefits to outweigh the undoubted disadvantages.
- We have concerns about the depth of plan in some areas, and the implication of this for the long-term energy efficiency of the building
- We recommend that the Outpatients department be moved to the ground floor so that it is more directly accessible
- The landscape specialists [and other consultants such as the M&E] should be involved in an integrated design development process as soon as possible. The car parking areas should be well landscaped, ideally with porous surfaces.
- Wider issues such as public transport provision and links with the local community should continue to be explored
- We are reassured by the comments on procurement and the long-term engagement of the architect

Diwedd/End

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