

Statws/Status:
Cyhoeddus / Public



Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: 14 February 2006
Design Review Report:

Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd: 1 February 2006
Meeting Date / Material Submitted:

Lleoliad/Location: Deiniol Road, Bangor

Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun Residential
Scheme Description:

Ymgynghorwyr Cynllunio: Gareth White Partnership
Planning Consultants: [Gareth White]

Cleient/Asiant: UPA Developments
Client/Agent: John Hope-Robinson

Pensaer/Architect: Pritchard Bond Architects
[Dic Pritchard, Steve Bond]

Awdurdod Cynllunio: Gwynedd CC
Planning Authority:

Statws Cynllunio: Full application submitted
Planning Status:

Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel:
Alan Francis (cadeirydd/chair) Paul Vanner
Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer) Jonathan Adams
Ben Sibert Douglas Hogg
Ed Colgan

Lead Panellist: Ed Colgan

Sylwedyddion/Observers: Charlie Deng
Design Review assistant

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

This scheme has been submitted for detailed planning permission, after discussions with the Local Authority. The brief is for a well designed building, modern in appearance, to include the maximum number of executive apartments. The spacious units will have balconies and good daylighting. The linear design follows the street line, turns the corner and presents a visually interesting building which still respects the context and topography. Its massing does not dominate the surrounding properties which are largely red brick 3-4 storey Victorian villas, with characteristic dormer and bay windows. The neighbouring Uxbridge Court on Holyhead Road is not regarded as a building to emulate.

Hipped roofs and dormers echo the details of earlier buildings, while a full height five sided bay window addresses the corner. Glazed vertical circulation elements are expressed and separate access points serve clusters of units, avoiding long corridors. Balconies are sleek with the structure expressed. The ridge height at the southern end of site, opposite the train station, is 1.3m higher than existing. At the northern end it is similar to neighbouring buildings. The elevation is simple and modern and the scale steps down to reflect the topography. The designers feel that the design shows a high standard of aesthetics, incorporating the best elements of surrounding buildings.

The number of parking spaces available has dictated the number of flats and the floorplan. Vehicular access will be as existing from Deiniol Road and the parking will be at semi-basement level. Existing pine trees on the boundary will be replaced with more appropriate trees and shrubs. The boundary wall will be retained in stone and render.

The Local Authority were unable to attend, but sent in comments. They welcome the redevelopment of this strategic site but expressed a little concern that the building will be overbearing. They consider the elevational treatment 'a little over fussy' and think the yellow brick window surrounds are 'somewhat contrived'.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

The Panel supported the proposed usage and redevelopment of this town centre site. We were, however, concerned about the proposed massing and noted that the neighbouring properties cited as precedents mostly stood in their own grounds, whereas the footprint of this building virtually fills the whole site. The architect pointed out that there is three storey, red brick terraced housing on Farrar Road which forms a triangle with Deiniol Road and Holyhead Road. Nevertheless, the Panel thought that the site was being overdeveloped.

The site is outside the Bangor conservation area, but faces the listed railway station. It was felt that the effect of this building would be overpowering when viewed from the station. Moreover, the inclusion of elements from surrounding buildings does not represent a true and sympathetic reflection. The original dormers and roof pitches are steeper and the fenestration more vertical and recessed than what is proposed here.

The Panel had strong reservations about the effect of the proposed development on the bungalow at 5, Deiniol Road. The architect stated that the majority of this building was 11.5 metres away from the boundary with no 5. Although in places the flat roof and rear wall of the car park abuts the boundary, it is lower than the bungalow and so presents no overlooking problems. The back of the bungalow which is next to this site is an area of paths, sheds and storage, and none of the glazing on this side serves primary rooms. Nevertheless, the Panel considered the new building would shield sunlight from the bungalow and garden, particularly in the afternoons, and there would be a dramatic change to the occupants' sense of enclosure and enjoyment of daylight. It was suggested that if the Neuadd Deiniol site was to be redeveloped, it should ideally include no 5, Deiniol Road. A perspective view looking towards the site from further down Deiniol Road, which compares existing and proposed massing, would be useful.

The Panel expressed surprise that loss of amenity had apparently not been raised as an issue, given the proximity to existing boundaries. It is likely that mature trees on the boundary, which might offer some visual shielding, will be lost in the construction process.

The Panel supported the relatively low parking standard as appropriate for this central site with good transport links, and repeated the authority's concerns about the lack of disabled parking provision.

The Panel regretted the lack of any outdoor space, and although it was pointed out that executive apartments do not necessarily require gardens, we remained concerned about the likely effect on the townscape. Also, the lack of any 'free' space on site would have implications for future maintenance and routine tasks such as window cleaning.

Discussion took place about some of the building's details, such as the position of opening lights and rainwater pipes. We thought that the design was over complex [eg gables competing with gull wing roofs] and needed to be simplified. The project as a whole would benefit from the redesign of some of the more costly elements, such as the fully glazed vertical circulation spaces and multiple roof pitches. This glazing in particular seems redundant as the lift shaft itself appears to prevent light from entering the lobby. We agreed with the local authority that the yellow bands of brickwork around the windows were inappropriate and likely to be the victims of poor workmanship.

Although the developer does not intend to have an EcoHomes assessment carried out, it was stated that this is a sustainable site because of its proximity to public transport. The roofs will be Welsh slate, insulation levels will be above the statutory minimum, and energy efficient boilers will be used in each flat. The Panel urged the designers to achieve natural ventilation in the car park, and to dispense with or relocate the extract grilles which are currently at eye level on the street corner.

Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel welcomes the continued use of this site for residential purposes and the principle of redevelopment. However, we consider this proposal to be unacceptable in its response to the site and the context. In particular:

- The current proposal represents an overdevelopment of the site. The massing and bulk need to be reduced, and consequently the number of units and parking spaces
- The loss of amenity which would be caused to no 5 Deiniol Road is unacceptable
- We agree with the local authority that the detailing is too fussy and needs to be simplified
- We would recommend that an EcoHomes rating be sought and the car park be naturally ventilated.

Diwedd/End

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