

Statws/Status:

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Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: Design Review Report:	13 February 2006
Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd: Meeting Date / Material Submitted:	1 February 2006
Lleoliad/Location:	Roath Basin South, Cardiff Bay
Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun Scheme Description:	Mixed use development
Cynllunio: Consultants:	White Young Green [Jessica Jones] Flint & Neill Partnership [Ian Firth] DEEW [Steven Smith]
Cleient/Asiant: Client/Agent:	WDA [Paul Williams]
Pensaer/Architect:	Studio Bednarski [Cezary Bednarski] LDA Design [Frazer Osment]
Awdurdod Cynllunio: Planning Authority:	Cardiff CC [Vivienne Williams]
Statws Cynllunio: Planning Status:	Outline consent pending.
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:

Paul Vanner

Sylwedyddion/Observers:

Charlie Deng
Design Review assistant

Declaration of interest: Jonathan Adams declared possible involvement in future development on the site. No objections were raised to his remaining in the meeting.

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

The presentation was primarily concerned with the public realm design strategy for the Roath Basin scheme and proposals for the outer lock bridge. The latter was the subject of a limited design competition won by Studio Bednarski.

LDA Design have been working on the Public Realm strategy for the last nine months and intend the strategy to be used as a tool to procure good quality streets and spaces. The existing landscape is post-industrial dockside, in a spectacular position, and merits the same quality of treatment which has made emerging waterfronts around the world into successful areas of regeneration. Examples were shown from Melbourne to Malmo. The designers wish to establish a clear relationship between the building line and the waterfront, and to create well-used public spaces which reflect the coastal context and the industrial past. The waterfront is treated as an area of key significance to the public realm, and distinct from internal streets and spaces. The aim is to create clean, uncluttered spaces using simple, high quality materials.

A movement framework was presented which defines mandatory main vehicular routes and areas with more flexible uses and treatments. A performance specification and palette of materials has been developed for each area. Two design approaches were outlined, depending on the relationship of buildings with the street – ie set back or brought forward. Streets and spaces are designed to be simple and uncomplicated, with a positive interaction between streets and buildings. A lighting strategy has been developed which integrates lighting with the streetscape. It will enhance amenity and safety while highlighting buildings and landscape features. It was emphasised that the strategy as a whole will be sufficiently robust and flexible to adapt as the development proceeds.

The outer lock bridge, while spanning a short distance, provides an important link to the site from the rest of the Bay. The designers proposed a mild steel folded plate structure supporting the bridge deck, with lightweight folded mesh parapets. The origami inspired structure avoids excessive loading onto the existing dock walls and facilitates continuous pedestrian access alongside the dock edge. The bridge will be used by pedestrians and cyclists, together with buses and emergency vehicles only. The shared use surface will be delineated by raised Trief kerbs with cast bronze ends. As the bridge is virtually square in plan, the aim is to create a sort of piazza, slightly elevated above ground level and independent of the lockside walls and development land. Lighting will be low key and the whole structure is designed to be removable if necessary.

Outline planning consent is pending, with the Section 106 still being drafted. Approval will be tied to the masterplan, and there are around 65 conditions, many

relating to the public realm. The authority wish to see the public realm and transport strategy [including a green travel plan] established early, to create the preconditions for a viable community. Materials should be related to Roath Basin North.

The WDA confirmed that this would probably be procured as a 'master-developer' scheme. They acknowledged the advantages this would bring, ensuring integration and continuity and allowing a holistic approach to all infrastructure works. The client will look to the chosen developers to add to the design process. A start on site is planned for December 2006, with the first buildings of Phase 1 completed by December 2008.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

The Design Review Panel last reviewed this scheme in March 2004 and the report issued at that time stated the importance of a quality landscape and public realm strategy, good pedestrian links and minimising the impacts of phasing particularly on public transport provision. Nearly two years on, the question remains of how to guarantee the implementation of the desired quality. The early delivery of both the new bridge and the public realm strategy will be vital in this regard and the Panel were informed that the bridge will form part of phase 1.

Similarly the transport plan needs to be established at an early stage, as the Planning Authority has indicated. The cycle strategy should provide for a dedicated lane or road surface, and again should be installed as early as possible. As indicated in our earlier report, there is potential conflict between roundabouts and pedestrian/cycle uses. The access routes to the lower ground parking areas need to be well integrated into the public realm.

The Panel recognised that this development will evolve over a number of years or even decades. The main part of Cardiff Bay is still within the time frame of the masterplan and remains unfinished. We urged the developer to achieve an appropriate scale and avoid the domestic design approach evident in other parts of the Bay. Having one 'master developer' should ensure continuity of all design strategies and codes. The Panel welcomed the 'village on an island' approach, but we would like to see more continuous frontages rather than separate blocks, possibly with less open space. The buildings need to be well integrated with each other, rather than trying to compete.

The Panel applauded the design approach to the lightly suspended bridge as dramatic but modest, not attempting to dominate the rest of the development. We welcomed the use of Trief kerbs as an alternative to normal vehicle-retaining parapets, and suggested that they may perhaps have to be extended further beyond the end of the bridge for safety reasons. The designer pointed out that heavy duty bollards would guide bridge users, and they needed to maintain pedestrian links along the sides of the dock. The existing visitor centre would need to be relocated to make way for the bridge structure.

It emerged that ownership of the dock walls, gates and bund is with ABP and the client will work with them to develop a strategy for restoring the gates, locking them in the open position, and possibly replacing the bund with a dam. This would in effect turn the dock into a harbour and various ideas were put forward to use and animate this space, for example a floating deck which could be stepped and used as

a theatre. The WDA retains the right to develop and maintain the south side of the basin as public realm, with ABP's approval. The requirement now is for adjacent landowners to support this scheme and commence discussions with the WDA.

The Panel were informed that it is intended that the bridge will be adopted and we urged that the use of Trief kerbs remain an essential part of this process, supported by precedent examples where they have worked well. The finish of the bridge will be painted corten steel [colour = 'crabshell']. The indicative design of lighting standards from the public realm strategy, which appears to echo the bridge form, is coincidental and may be changed. The Panel would like to see a substantial part of the public realm installed at the same time as the bridge, so that it becomes a well used route from the beginning. We positively supported the waterfront treatment which showed an absence of railings.

The Panel considered it vitally important that the detailing of the junctions to the steelwork in the centre of the bridge and the quality of welding should be managed very carefully, as this might otherwise be quite a clumsy solution.

The integrated approach to infrastructure was welcomed and the Panel suggested that provision for a district heating system, low carbon technologies and fuels, and sustainable drainage should be incorporated at an early stage.

Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel welcomes and strongly supports the principle of this development as well as the particular proposals seen today. We consider this to be a commendable response to the site, the brief and the masterplan, with minor revisions. In particular:

- The Panel supports the early evolution of a public realm strategy, incorporating landscape and public art
- We welcome the authority's insistence on the early adoption of a transport strategy and green transport plan
- We are encouraged by the design integration and continuity likely to result from the 'master developer' approach.
- We would like to see more continuous building frontages, especially on the waterfront, and a good architectural treatment of scale and detail
- We consider the bridge design to be an excellent solution and we applaud its lightness and transparency, but urge caution in the detailing of the joints of the steelwork.
- We agree that the bund should be replaced and recognise that the good will of the current owners is necessary to achieve a successful solution
- We recommend that the bridge is adopted with its currently proposed surface design and treatment
- We urge the client and developers to install sustainable technologies at the infrastructure stage.

The Client has confirmed that they are willing for this report to be made public.

Diwedd/End

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

