

Statws/Status:
Cyhoeddus / Public



Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: 10 March 2006
Design Review Report:

Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd: 01 March 2006
Meeting Date / Material Submitted:

Lleoliad/Location: Gunners Club, Pill, Newport

Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun
Scheme Description: Residential

Developer/Datblygwr: Langdale Western Ltd
[Paul Fletcher]

Pensaer/Architect: Austin-Smith:Lord
[Ashley Davies]

Ymgynghorwyr Cynllunio: RPS [Sean Taylor]
Planning Consultants:

Awdurdod Cynllunio: Newport CC
Planning Authority: [Wendy Hall, Roger Richards]

Statws Cynllunio: Full planning application
Planning Status: submitted

Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel:
John Punter (cadeirydd/chair) Paul Vanner
Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer) Ed Colgan
Lyn Owen Douglas Hogg
Ewan Jones

Lead Panellist: Paul Vanner

Sylwedyddion/Observers: Charlie Deng
Design Review assistant

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

Pillgwenlly is the most deprived ward in Newport and this is the first of a number of regeneration schemes which the Council expects to come forward. The area is identified in the Newport Unlimited masterplan as suitable for residential, leisure and commercial development. The site of the old Gunners Club is on the threshold between an Edwardian grain and facades to the south, and a more modern pattern of redevelopment to the north characterised by courtyards, closes and modern terraces with wider setbacks. The Gunners Club does not sit comfortably with either type, and this proposal attempts to engage with both. It reflects the prevailing block pattern to the north and reinforces the existing building line along Adeline Street.

The design recognises the importance of the corner of Adeline Street and Pottery Terrace opposite St Stephens church. It proposes a flat-roofed, four storey corner block, no higher than the ridgeline of the church and in brickwork of a similar colour to the church stonework. The three storey, vertical facades of the Edwardian houses are reflected in the south and west elevations, with flat roofed dormers just above eaves level and articulated full-height glazed openings, incorporating opaque panels and opening windows. The roof lines step down either side of the corner block to reflect existing building heights. The U-shaped plan wraps around a secure enclosed courtyard, which is completely given over to parking. The internal layouts are designed to limit overlooking.

The developer has consulted with Newport Council and several meetings have been held to progress the scheme. The Local Authority acknowledged that the scheme has changed and improved in response to their comments. They have no objections in principle to these proposals but are concerned about some design aspects and highways issues. The latter have now mainly been addressed, apart from the off-pavement parking, which Highways want set further back. Unresolved design issues include the northern elevation and its fenestration. This is a current application, which could go to the next available planning committee.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

The Panel welcomed the principle of regeneration of this area with residential uses and recognised that the proposal should be realistic and deliverable within prevailing property prices in the area. We supported the proposed density but, while we agreed with the design decision to emphasise the corner, we found the corner block as currently proposed, to be unsatisfactory. It appears too heavy, ponderous and cube-like with its flat roof. The brickwork of the tower appears to be on the same plane as the render of the adjoining wings, whereas we would expect to see some articulation at this point.

The Panel understood why the roof pitch on the remainder of the scheme had been lowered in order to reduce the impact of three storeys, and to meet planning objections. However, we were of the view that any benefits were discounted by the awkward low dormers, the expense of the detailing, and the need to drain the roofs between the dormers which would appear to necessitate 9 downpipes on the western elevation and 17 different downpipes overall.

In response the architect stated that they had looked at different formats for the corner block, including a mansard roof, while trying to keep it as low as possible.

The Panel considered that the principal objective should be to create robust, economic housing on this site, without any future maintenance problems. The architectural treatment would benefit from being simplified. Roof pitches could be made steeper and the dormers removed, which would save money all round. Alternatively, full dormers could be detailed, making greater use of the roofspace. Steeper roof pitches would in fact better match the roof pitches in the locality. The Panel also observed that if greater residential densities are a planning requirement, then taller buildings should be acceptable as a consequence.

The problem of the corner tower was discussed further, and the architect was reluctant to lose it, feeling that it provided a full stop to the long elevations. The Panel was concerned about the height of the corner but was more disconcerted by the architectural treatment, and thought that a gable end with some fenestration would be a better solution.

We were also disappointed at the lack of front doors off the street, which reinforces the impression of an inward looking development. The landscape treatment was discussed and the Panel thought that the narrow band of open plan greenspace shown had no function and was tokenistic at best. A more urban finish would be more appropriate in this situation, perhaps with a low wall and traditional railings, perhaps reinforced with shrubs behind.. Alternatively we suggested that the space could be used for small private gardens accessed from ground floor front doors.

We were informed that the parking ratio was 1:1 and the Panel supported this lower level of provision. The inclusion of cycle storage space was also welcomed. The Panel thought that grasscrete would not be an appropriate surface for the parking spaces on the verge if they were to be in use for most of the time. We did not support the Highways concern about further set-back of this parking. Adeline Street is not a busy road and there appears to be adequate visibility for reversing on to the street.

The Panel observed that single aspect flats do not help to achieve a functional layout, or good levels of daylight and ventilation. We suggested omitting the long corridors on the north side of the east/west blocks, in favour of additional staircases. This would free up the layout, and allow for some front doors and access to private open space. It would also help to break up the elevations with entrances and stairways, and might begin to resolve the tightness of the parking on the south side of the courtyard.

The Panel recognised the sustainable location of the housing, but regretted the lack of any environmental assessment. We applauded the proposed use of local materials and good daylighting levels. We urged the design team to consider a single heating system as being more efficient, especially as there will be a management company involved.

One member of the Panel thought that 3-4 storey blocks was fundamentally the wrong approach and challenged the dominance of the church. Two storeys or two and a half storeys, using a mansard roof to reduce the overall height, would be preferable. The developer stated that two storeys would not be an economically feasible option.

Crynodeb/Summary

On the whole, the Panel accepts the design solution of a three storey perimeter block for this site. We consider the proposal to be an acceptable solution to the brief and the site, albeit with some major revisions. In particular:

- We would prefer to see a conventional, if higher, roofline without dormers, giving cleaner lines and some financial savings
- We would like to see an alternative solution to the corner block which has more satisfactory proportions and roofline
- We suggest a revised internal layout which would provide more usable space and allow a more satisfactory treatment of the semi-public areas between the housing and the street.
- We find the position of the off-pavement parking acceptable but are dubious about the use of grasscrete
- The design of the perimeter edge should be improved, using a more urban form incorporating hard landscape, private space accessed from flats and fenced off areas
- We would like to see more evidence of environmental performance and an energy efficient heating system.

Diwedd/End

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