

**Statws/Status:**

**Cyhoeddus / Public**

DESIGN  
COMMISSION  
FOR WALES  
COMISIWN  
DYLUNIO  
CYMRU

<b>Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: Design Review Report:</b>	<b>13 April 2006</b>
<b>Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd: Meeting Date / Material Submitted:</b>	<b>5 April 2006</b>
<b>Lleoliad/Location:</b>	<b>Hanbury Garage site, Caerleon</b>
<b>Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun Scheme Description:</b>	<b>Residential</b>
<b>Cleient/Asiant: Client/Agent:</b>	<b>Martin Richards</b>
<b>Pensaer/Architect:</b>	<b>Willdig Lammie [Paul Treweeks]</b>
<b>Ymgynghorwyr Cynllunio: Planning Consultants:</b>	<b>RPS [Lyn Powell, Mark Roberts]</b>
<b>Awdurdod Cynllunio: Planning Authority:</b>	<b>Newport CC [Wendy Hall, Tracey Brooks]</b>
<b>Statws Cynllunio: Planning Status:</b>	<b>Planning application lodged Feb 2006</b>
<b>Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel: Alan Francis (cadeirydd/chair) Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer) Mike Biddulph Ewan Jones</b>	<b>Kedrick Davies Jonathan Adams Douglas Hogg</b>
<b>Sylwedyddion/Observers: Marilyn Custard</b>	<b>Caerleon Civic Society</b>

## **Cyflwyniad/Presentation**

The site is located on the approach to Caerleon from the south along the B4596, overlooking the River Usk to the east, and with the Roman legionary fortress and amphitheatre 40 metres to the west. The applicants appreciate that this is a sensitive historic site. It is within the Caerleon conservation area and next to a scheduled ancient monument, which is important in terms of assessing its acceptability. However, as it sits within the settlement limits of the town, as defined in the UDP, the principle of use is already established. In addition, it is a previously developed, brownfield site, which currently contains a petrol filling station, workshops and bungalow. Although there was no requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment, RPS have carried out a screening exercise and an archaeological assessment, which concluded that it would be unlikely for any significant remains to be found. In fact, 60-70% of the area of the site has been disturbed in the past, including for petrol storage tanks. A flood risk assessment indicates that part of the site is classified as zone C2. However, a separate assessment by a hydrologist is likely to provide reassurance that development is feasible.

This proposal shows buildings located at back-of-pavement, elevational materials of stone and render, and a varied roofscape. 16 apartments, mainly 1 and 2 bedroom, are provided in 2 and 3 storey blocks with 28 parking spaces. The blocks are arranged roughly in a C-shaped courtyard facing south, but allowing glimpses into and through the site. The taller blocks are located at the corners of the site and, together with the roof planes, help to define the courtyard. Clerestory windows allow daylight into upper floors. The existing stone wall will be tied in with the new plinth, which will also be in stone. There is a commitment to using high quality, natural materials. The proposed lead roofs will now be in slate. The sustainability of the site was emphasised in terms of its location close to bus routes and within walking distance of the town centre. It was confirmed that the parking standards are those set by the Local Authority.

There have been pre-application discussions with the Local Authority, and objections from Cadw have been received. The authority agree that the site is within the settlement boundary, and therefore the principle of use is sound, but they also agree with Cadw that it is isolated from the historic core of the town. They consider that the way in which the design responds to its context is of paramount importance, and they seek DCFW's views on this. They are not looking for a gateway development on this highly visible site and would wish to assess the prominence of these proposals from short- and medium-distance viewpoints. The planning application is being held in abeyance pending an archaeological evaluation.

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

The Panel noted that in 1901 there were no buildings on this site, and the present buildings date from the 1950s and subsequently. We accepted that the site lies within the settlement boundary, but agreed with the Local Authority on the overarching importance of the context. The present town and the suburb across the river are tightly defined.

In view of the dramatic landscape and the sensitivity of the site, the Panel thought that any development should be as restrained as possible. We found the current

proposals to be over-scaled. They would reduce the visibility of the archaeological remains from the approaching road, and of the river valley from the fort. Ideally, the footprint and position of the existing buildings should inform the proposed massing, and be used as a guide and limit for any future development. The 'back-of-pavement' layout is not appropriate in this context and a green boundary treatment would be far preferable. The architectural language should relate more to the nearest building, Bridge House, than to a 3 storey building in the centre of Caerleon.

The Local Authority representative stated that they would prefer to see 2 storey [maximum] blocks located back from the highway. The Panel thought that the dominant landscape element was in fact the line of mature trees on the Roman fortress rampart to the north west, and that any new development should not breach this tree line when viewed from the approach across the bridge, and when moving south towards the bridge away from Caerleon. We agreed that this should not be treated as a gateway site.

The Panel queried the decision to specify 16 units. The applicant pointed out that there was a range of densities within Caerleon and that current planning policy generally advocated higher densities. The Panel thought that the higher densities that may be appropriate in the centre of a small town were not appropriate for this very sensitive edge of town site. It was confirmed that undercroft parking was included as there was a wish to avoid ground floor accommodation facing the street.

The Panel thought that a simpler and more linear form could work well, rather than a courtyard format with corner towers. A defensive wall on the street frontage to the east was not considered appropriate. The anomaly of south facing walls with no fenestration could be resolved by moving the buildings away from the boundary. We suggested that a smaller scheme with larger units, such as town houses, might provide an economically viable alternative to the current proposals. We would like to see the car parking numbers reduced. We agreed with the proposal to use slate instead of metal roofs, which could lead to difficulties in detailing dormers and downpipes.

The Panel accepted that the compactness of development and location of the site contributed to the sustainability of the scheme, but we were disappointed that no extra measures to reduce carbon emissions were envisaged, and that no EcoHomes assessment would be carried out.

### **Crynodeb/Summary**

The Panel appreciates the difficulty in developing this particularly sensitive site. We welcome the clarity of the presentation, but we consider this proposal to be an unacceptable response to the site and its context. In particular:

- This is not a gateway site and any development should be modest and subservient to the context.
- The tree line and the earlier forms of settlement should inform the scale and massing of any future proposals.
- We would support a reduction in the proposed parking provision.
- We consider an urban courtyard layout, taken to the boundaries of the site, to be inappropriate.

- A more convincing sustainability strategy should be advanced and an EcoHomes assessment carried out.
- The Panel would wish to see any revisions to this scheme or future proposals for this site, prior to a planning submission.

**Diwedd/End**

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