

**Statws/Status:**

**Cyhoeddus / Public**

DESIGN  
COMMISSION  
FOR WALES  
COMISIWN  
DYLUNIO  
CYMRU

<b>Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: Design Review Report:</b>	<b>21 September 2006</b>
<b>Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd: Meeting Date / Material Submitted:</b>	<b>6 September 2006</b>
<b>Lleoliad/Location:</b>	<b>Hanbury Garage, Caerleon</b>
<b>Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun Scheme Description:</b>	<b>Residential</b>
<b>Cleient/Asiant: Client/Agent:</b>	<b>Martin Richards, Joy Richards</b>
<b>Pensaer/Architect:</b>	<b>Willdig Lammie Partnership [Paul Treweeks]</b>
<b>Ymgynghorwyr Cynllunio: Planning Consultants:</b>	<b>RPS</b>
<b>Awdurdod Cynllunio: Planning Authority:</b>	<b>Newport CC [Tracey Brooks, Wendy Richards]</b>
<b>Statws Cynllunio: Planning Status:</b>	<b>Application lodged, re-submission</b>
<b>Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel:</b>	
<b>Alan Francis (cadeirydd/chair)</b>	<b>Jonathan Hines</b>
<b>Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer)</b>	<b>Lyn Owen</b>
<b>Richard Parnaby</b>	<b>Ed Colgan</b>
<b>Lead Panellist:</b>	<b>Jonathan Hines</b>
<b>Sylwedyddion/Observers:</b>	<b>Kathryn Williams, Howells School Roya Yadollahi, Howells School</b>

## **Cyflwyniad/Presentation**

This revised proposal responds to DCFWs previous comments made at an earlier review in April 2006. The site layout has been changed to provide linear development along the south west boundary, leaving an open green boundary to the south and east, with unimpeded views to the tree line and the town. The scale of the development has been reduced and stepped down towards the road. This is no longer seen as a landmark building on a gateway site. The density has been slightly reduced from 16 to 15 apartments.

The application has only just been registered and so no formal analysis has yet been carried out by the Local Authority, although there has been some discussion with the applicant concerning earlier plans. The LPA still have some concern about the proposed massing to the rear of the site. They feel that the effect on the view when coming out of Caerleon is as important as the view on entering across the bridge from the south. However, they welcome the rendered walls, slate roofs, simpler plan and reduced scale. The building entrances have also been improved in response to LPA comments.

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

The Panel agreed that this proposal represented a significant improvement on the earlier version, and thought that retaining views of the tree line, re-orientation of buildings on the site, and a more sympathetic material treatment, were all moves in the right direction.

However, we still found the massing rather clumsy and disorganised. There are some awkward corners created, along with some inaccessible external spaces. The internal planning appears to be contorted and dysfunctional. The deep plan form results in some single aspect apartments with north facing windows, and we thought that despite the views offered, this would seriously impinge on the quality of the internal space. Although we supported the basic design intention, we found the resolution inelegant and slightly 'ramshackle', looking more like a conversion than a rationally organised new building. The architect stated that this effect, of having grown and expanded over a period of time, was deliberate, in a similar way to the Hanbury Arms pub nearby which had started life as a farmhouse and been through several adaptations. The Panel considered that, while this was a legitimate design approach, it did not excuse poor site planning. The idea of using historical precedent is attractive, but it has to work. The solution as presented is problematic and the awkward internal layout is in need of revision.

The Panel noted that the drawings contained several inaccuracies and that some elements in the plan do not correspond to the elevations. A general tidying up is needed and we think that this in itself could help to improve and rationalise the site organisation. We agreed with the LPA that the height at the rear of the site does extend to 3 storeys, rather than the claimed 2.5.

Although the number of units has been reduced from 16 to 15, we thought that there was still possibly overdevelopment on this site. A slight reduction in numbers and a more relaxed approach might allow the 'ramshackle' theme to work better.

The uncomfortable triangular external spaces need to be better integrated and made more usable, ideally with access from adjacent ground floor apartments. We thought that the fenestration should be better proportioned, and while the architect was aware of the danger of looking mock historic, we thought that there were many examples of where the old and new had been integrated successfully. We noted that the ground floor lounge window to the south of the plan was very close to the access road for Bridge House. This was the result of a new accessway being inserted between two apartments and pushing the footprint further south, but it needs to be resolved.

We were told that the boundary treatment is not yet determined. Maintenance of external spaces will be carried out by a management company. It has been agreed with the Environment Agency that specialised flood protection measures are not required. Low height stone walls will be used to break up the car parking area and reduce its visual impact from the road. A semi-public buffer space will be created around the site entrance with appropriate planting.

The provision of car parking space, agreed with Highways, is relatively generous as there is no on-street car parking nearby and public transport provision is very limited. Cycle storage will be provided. We would like to see an alternative to tarmac for the surface treatment, and an absence of white lines or indeed any delineation.

Despite our earlier recommendation, there is still a lack of any sustainability strategy for this site. The Panel accepted that the re-location of the buildings on the site did not allow for good solar access, but we still thought it would be possible to achieve a high standard of environmental performance. We would like to see this requirement incorporated into the transfer of the site to a developer, in the same way that we would expect design quality to be protected. We supported the use of timber windows but the architect was advised that artificial slates would not be acceptable in a conservation area.

### **Crynodb/Summary**

The Panel support the relocation of the buildings on the site and, generally speaking, the elevational form. We consider these proposals to be an acceptable revised response to the site and the brief, with some relatively minor amendments necessary. In particular:

- We find the proposed height and massing acceptable, although we think the scheme might represent over-development in terms of plan arrangement
- We have concerns about the poorly organised layout of external and internal space. The 'ramshackle' approach is valid but it should still be functional and elegant
- Larger windows with better daylighting would not detract from this approach and would deliver occupant benefits
- A sustainability strategy should be devised which goes beyond minimum statutory requirements and is tied into land transfer and/or planning approval
- A good landscape treatment is vital, and the nature of boundary treatments, hard surfaces, and the height and materials for the front wall, should all be defined and approved before planning permission is granted.

**Diwedd/End**

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