| Statws/Status: |
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| Cyhoeddus / Public |

DESIGN COMMISSION FOR WALES
COMISIWN DYLUNIO CYMRU

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| **Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: Design Review Report:** | **15 May 2007** |
| **Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd: Meeting Date / Material Submitted:** | **9 May 2007** |
| **Lleoliad/Location:** | **Old Station Road, Porthcawl** |
| **Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun Scheme Description:** | **Residential** |
| **Developer/Datblygwr:** | **Not known** |
| **Pensaer/Architect:** | **Quorum Associates [David Morgans]** |
| **Ymgynghorwyr Cynllunio: PlanningConsultants:** | **n/a** |
| **Awdurdod Cynllunio: Planning Authority:** | **Bridgend CBC [Tony Gore]** |
| **Statws Cynllunio: Planning Status:** | **Planning application submitted October 06** |
| **Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/ Design Review Panel:** | |
| **John Punter (cadeirydd/chair)** | **Ashley Bateson** |
| **Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer)** | **Phil Roberts** |
| **Charlie Deng (swyddog/officer)** | |
| **Lead Panellist:** | **Phil Roberts** |

**Cyflwyniad/Presentation**

The design approach has been largely determined by the nature of the site, which is located next to a major access road into Porthcawl. This dual carriageway road runs on the western boundary of the site and severs the residential/mixed use area around the site from the town centre. This area has now become run down and is in need of regeneration.

The quarter circular form of the building is intended to lead people in to the town. The north facade is largely blank while the south facing aspect opens out towards the town and takes advantage of the best views to the sea. The orientation and fenestration have been informed by the solar access and sustainability considerations. There are two apartments on each floor and all the main habitable rooms face south or east. Local precedents for this design include the Pavilion and the lighthouse on the sea front and an attempt has been made to incorporate a seaside aesthetic. A glazed staircase is shown on the north west facade, the glass etched with a mural, and it is intended to hold a local competition for the artwork of the mural.

The construction will be timber frame, in order to accommodate higher insulation levels, and to achieve better buildability for the curved form. Underfloor heating and grey water recycling are included, along with solar PV panels to light the public areas. A ground source heat pump is under consideration, but may not be feasible as the site is on rock.

The Local Planning Authority recognise the importance of the site and of the taller building proposed and consider this merited referral to DCFW. A regeneration strategy exists for areas to the west, east and south of this site, and the proposed building would be highly visible from those areas. It would be the first building in the area of this type, size and design, and would therefore serve as a benchmark for future development. An SPG for tall buildings has been approved by committee but not yet by the full council.

The LA requested a shadow survey to show the current and proposed impact on the buildings to the north. The existing building on site [2.5 storeys] casts a substantial shadow on these buildings and their gardens. Because of the narrower profile and the curve of the proposed building, the survey showed that it would have positive benefits at some times of the year [especially mid-summer], and disbenefits at others [especially mid-winter]. There would be less shading of the gardens and rear elevations in the afternoons. Thus, it was judged that the proposal would pose no overall disbenefit, compared with the current situation. The authority would have preferred to see the building positioned further forward on the site, but recognised that there were issues of land

ownership and an existing sewer as a constraint. The community and town council have been supportive.

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

The Panel appreciated the clear explanation of the design philosophy underpinning this proposal. However, we would have liked to see the results of the shadow survey and a wider contextual analysis. Our major concern had been with the proposed height of the building and its impact on adjoining properties, but we were reassured by the reported conclusions of the shadowing survey concerning the buildings to the north.

The Panel was informed that the depot site which adjoins this site to the east, is likely to be developed for light industrial use and to include the relocated garage repair workshop which belongs to the owner and developer of this site. Two other sites to the south and southeast of this site [known as the car park site and garage site respectively] have received planning permission for residential use, with white rendered two to three storey apartment buildings with a similar aesthetic to the current proposal.

It was confirmed that the proposed parking standard is 1 per unit plus 1 per 5 units for visitors [14 spaces in all]. The amount of cycle parking is not yet determined, but it was stated that the site could easily accommodate 14 spaces. Similarly the location of a bin storage area was unspecified.

The Panel advised caution with a six storey timber frame construction, and in particular advised that adequate provision should be made for movement and settling of the frame in order to ensure the integrity of the render.

The Panel received further details of the sustainability strategy including individual condensing gas boilers with underfloor heating delivery. This will entail vertical flues and service ducts, as well as air inlet panels on the facades. We pointed out that a single central boiler with heat meters for individual apartments would give better energy efficiency and could be adapted in the future to run off biomass. This heating system could be extended to the adjoining sites about to be developed, and the mix of commercial and residential uses would optimise the efficiency of the system as a whole. Omitting the ventilation panels from the facades would improve the architectural treatment.

Although we were pleased to note the client's commitment to photovoltaic panels and grey water recycling, we questioned whether these particular technologies were the most appropriate, and suggested

that they be re-evaluated according to the criteria of cost and minimising carbon emissions. We thought that solar thermal panels, rainwater recycling with efficient appliances, and biomass heating would probably deliver a better environmental performance and we encouraged the client to commit to achieving an EcoHomes Excellent rating. The Panel also suggested that composite timber/aluminium windows would be preferable to aluminium, and that a sedum roof would offer environmental advantages. We thought that high level windows (to prevent overlooking of adjacent properties) should be included on the north facade over living rooms and kitchens which would otherwise lack good levels of natural daylight.

The Panel noted that this area of Porthcawl was dependent on an underpass connection for pedestrian access to the town centre and we wondered whether this might be improved as part of a Section 106 agreement. We were informed that a contribution to improvement of local parks has already been requested. We were pleased to note that expressions of interest in these new residential units has come from younger people, and agreed that the addition of private housing to existing Local Authority and Housing Association housing would support the planned regeneration and environmental improvements.

**Crynodeb/Summary**

The Panel was favourably impressed with this presentation. We consider the proposed building to be well designed and elegant and we support the contemporary seaside aesthetic. As part of a wider programme of residential development in this area, this proposal should contribute to the substantial regeneration of this part of Porthcawl.

**Our general support and endorsement of this proposal, however, is conditional upon the development of a justified and coherent sustainability strategy.** This should be progressed with the input of an M&E consultant. A commitment to achieve EcoHomes Excellent would set an important precedent and be an exemplar of best practice. The following points should be noted:

- The proposed height of the building did originally arouse our concerns, but we are prepared to be reassured by the shadow study evaluation and comparison with the existing impact. We would still like to see the results of the shadow study and request that 3 copies be sent to the Commission.
- The sustainability strategy should propose an optimal combination of measures and technologies, based on the criteria of cost and low carbon performance. We suggest that a single heating system be evaluated, together with solar water heating, rainwater collection

and recycling, and a sedum roof. We think that the deep plan living spaces and kitchens should have more daylight introduced from the north in the form of high level windows.

- We would like to see a contribution made to the improvement of the public realm, in particular the underpass and its approaches.

**Diwedd/End**

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