

Statws/Status:

Cyhoeddus / Public

DESIGN
COMMISSION
FOR WALES
COMISIWN
DYLUNIO
CYMRU

Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: Design Review Report:	30 August 2007
Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Meeting Date:	22 August 2007
Lleoliad/Location:	Bay Pointe, Cardiff Bay
Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun Scheme Description:	Residential
Developer/Datblygwr:	Allied Developments [Martin Griffiths] City Lofts [Michael Bryn-Jones]
Pensaer/Architect:	Atkins [Ray Phillips, David Buckland] Conran & Partners [Tim Bowder-Ridger]
Cynllunio: Consultants:	Savills [Chris Potts] WSP [Alec Prince]
Awdurdod Cynllunio: Planning Authority:	Cardiff CC [Nigel Hanson]
Statws Cynllunio: Planning Status:	Amendment to outline consent, submitted May 2007
Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/ Design Review Panel: John Punter (cadeirydd/chair) Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer) Richard Parnaby	Gerard Ryan Jonathan Adams Phil Roberts

Lead Panellist:

Phil Roberts

Sylwedyddion/Observers:

**Steve Smith, RCT CBC
Osian Roberts, MA student,
Urban Design**

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

DCFW first reviewed a proposal for 1127 residential units on this site in September 2005, when we supported the aspirations for a high quality of design and sustainability. However, we thought the proposal showed a confused aesthetic, and the environmental standards were disappointingly low. We called for more detailed information on the form and elevations of the towers, the overall site layout and the visual impact from defined viewpoints.

The site was purchased by the developer in April 2006 and the proposals were re-evaluated in the light of the developer's input. There followed a 12 month review process involving the Local Authority and other interested parties, resulting in an application to amend conditions on the existing outline approval to produce a new masterplan and increase the number of residential units from 1127 to 2400. This was lodged in May 2007.

The design team stated that sustainability was a central consideration in the development of a future community. The development is on a remediated brownfield site and makes efficient use of the land available. Parking is mostly underground and at the relatively low standard of 78%. There is good bus access to the site, as well as a water bus stop, and cycleways are provided. Green roofs are shown on some blocks and there will be rainwater collection for irrigation. The apartments will be naturally ventilated, a site-wide CHP system will be used and an EcoHomes rating of Very Good will be achieved. 276 affordable homes will be provided in buildings 4, 5 and 6. [A requirement of 11.5% on-site provision was specified in the outline consent].

The context of the site has informed the site layout and block form, with building heights stepping down to the south to respond to the river and Penarth headland. To the north, views towards the city across the Bay were exploited and the building heights were increased to announce the presence of the development from a distance. The aim is to create an iconic skyline with tall slender towers which are stepped in plan and elevation to break up the massing.

The Local Authority representative pointed out that the principle of residential use is already established, but the authority has three main concerns about the current proposal:

1. whether the transport and parking assumptions are realistic and whether the transport infrastructure exists to support this scale of development. It was pointed out that this proposal does not include a footbridge link to Cogan station.
2. the appropriateness of the scale of development on this site, and the impact of tall buildings on the surrounding public spaces.
3. the proposed mix of accommodation, with only 66 of the 2400 units being three bed.

The wider question of this proposal's relationship to the masterplan still needs to be considered.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

The Panel's major concern with this scheme was the proposed density of 461 du/hectare, and the consequent overdevelopment of the site, which we thought gave rise to other problems of architectural treatment and the creation of an attractive and vital public realm.

The Panel thought that the tower blocks appeared bulky and monolithic, and less elegant than the previous presentation. The architectural treatment lacked distinction and we thought would not inspire popular affection. We did not object to the height of the blocks per se, but to the decision to create 'double' towers, leading to a wall effect obliterating views beyond, and leaving the northern shoreline in shade for most of the day.

The proposals for a sustainable development were also disappointing, and we thought that a rating of EcoHomes Very Good was not sufficiently ambitious. The Panel supported the conclusions of the recent CABE report on Tall Buildings, including the recommendation that tall buildings should set exemplary sustainability standards and exceed the latest regulations and planning policies. We therefore stated that the achievement of an EcoHomes Excellent was an absolute minimum requirement, and assumed that this would be made easier by the natural ventilation of the blocks, rather than the comfort cooling referred to in the previous review. We supported the inclusion of a CHP district heating system and advised that it should be run on a low-carbon fuel. The extent of green roofs was clarified as extending to all the lower blocks and the Panel would want to see the area of green roofs maximised.

The team confirmed that the proportion for affordable housing specified in the outline consent was 20% overall, with a financial contribution

equivalent to 9% and an on-site provision of 11.5%. The absolute numbers have risen proportionally with the increased density, and the LA Housing Department and the RSL are content with the proposed provision.

The Panel requested clarification on the exact location and extent of public / private space. We were informed that three raised, south facing courtyards, and one to the north, were private outdoor space set at one storey [3m] higher than grade. The podium level has been set by the remediation treatment and the decision not to export any waste, and is approx 3m higher than the water level. We thought the public spaces lacked definition and a coherent landscape treatment, and the way in which the Central Park area closed down towards the south appeared perverse and would impair its microclimate. The team stated that the L shape of blocks 4 and 5 was formed specifically to enclose the courtyards and stop the space 'leaching out' and that there was sufficient depth of space behind these seven storey blocks to get summer sun. The Panel thought that the shadowing effects of the blocks would be considerable and some parts of the site would only see sunlight at midsummer. Much of the northern boardwalk would be in constant shade and would be oppressed by the six tall towers close by. We thought the kink in the main boulevard appeared arbitrary.

The Panel queried how deliverable the extensive tall trees were – they have a significant and positive impact as shown on the submitted drawings. In response to the viability of large trees sitting over the underground car park, the team stated that mounding would be used to provide space for the roots of large trees. We noted that the provision of such extensive mounding would have a significant impact on legibility and views out, and therefore ought to be clearly shown. In addition, the exposed position and saline atmosphere would not be conducive to tree growth, and species for planting would need to be chosen carefully to suit the prevailing conditions.

On the waterfronts, which are shown as three metre high steel piling, we thought it was very important to develop a landscape/ecology strategy to soften these edges and create wetland habitats, allowing the public to get closer to the water level wherever possible. The Panel noted that the extensive undercroft parking raised the various podia and this meant that the relationship of users to the water was quite remote. The claims for views from within the scheme to places without the scheme needed to be justified by visualisations.

The team confirmed that a wind analysis and computer generated assessments have been carried out. This desk-top study showed that the resulting microclimate would be unacceptable without mitigation. Canopies, screening and landscaping would therefore be used as

mitigation if these results were confirmed in further studies. The Panel thought that these results should have driven the design and layout from the beginning, so that dubious 'add-on' mitigation measures were unnecessary. Particular doubts were cast upon the wind effects on the central park because of the twin towers on either side. It was confirmed that the adjacent Yacht Club has been consulted about the effects on sailing in the Bay, and that further analysis is proceeding.

The team pointed out that in terms of traffic generation, they have spent a year looking at this and have produced an estimate of trip rates, which has been accepted by the Local Authority.

Crynodb/Summary

The Panel welcomed the opportunity to review this scheme again. However, we think it is an unacceptable response to the site and the context and a gross over-development.

- Our fundamental objection to the proposal is that it is too dense and overscaled. For the proposed density to be acceptable, the architecture and site planning would have to be exceptional, and this is not the case here. We doubt that this density on this site could be made acceptable.
- The heaviness and massing of the 3 paired towers, [which appear more like 6] is particularly problematic, and the views into the site from some angles are completely unacceptable.
- We think that the scale of the towers will create problems for the establishment of an animated and well used public realm, much of which will be subject to high winds and overshadowing. The Central Park area should be opened up more towards the south and the river, to improve solar access and reduce wind speeds.
- We find the architectural treatment (insofar as it has been developed) monolithic and inelegant, and this is not helped by the 'double block' approach. It needs much more subtlety and refinement.
- The sustainability proposals are inadequate and while we welcome proposals for natural ventilation and a CHP district heating system, we think there needs to be an absolute commitment to higher standards, of EcoHomes Excellent or equivalent, and additional evidence that the development is moving towards carbon neutrality. The benefits of green roofs should be maximised by extending their use throughout.
- We would prefer to see a 30% affordable housing contribution, but accept that lower standards have been agreed previously.
- We think that the public transport infrastructure is completely inadequate and that a single bus loop and the vague promise of a

footbridge to a railway station (more than a kilometre away) is an unacceptable response.

- We are concerned about the quality of the boardwalk (heavily shaded) and the southern piazzas which lack any active uses. We consider that the sheet piling of the water's edge needs to be lowered in places for public benefit, and softened by a landscape/ecology strategy.
- We think that generally the site plan shows a promising treatment of public and private spaces, which could be the basis for a good landscaping and public realm strategy subject to the comments above.
- We note that there are further issues, of internal layout, mix of accommodation, and accessibility, which we did not have time to address

The Panel would be happy to review this scheme again. However, we will oppose the granting of planning consent for the amended outline application and we will advise the Minister to call-in the application if necessary.

Diwedd/End

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