

Statws/Status:

Cyhoeddus / Public



Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: Design Review Report:	25 February 2008
Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Meeting Date:	13 February 2008
Lleoliad/Location:	Adam Street, Cardiff
Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun Scheme Description:	Residential, some mixed use
Cleient/Asiant: Client/Agent:	Marcol Asset Management [Derek Rapport]
Developer/Datblygwr:	n/a
Pensaer/Architect:	Wigley Fox [Rhodri Morgan, Gareth Brown]
Cynllunio/Consultants:	Faber Maunsell [Steve Ward]
Awdurdod Cynllunio: Planning Authority:	Cardiff CC [Barry Lomax]
Statws Cynllunio: Planning Status:	Application submitted Dec 07
Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/ Design Review Panel: Alan Francis (cadeirydd/chair) Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer) Charlie Deng (swyddog/officer) Ewan Jones	Steve Smith Ed Colgan Phil Roberts
Lead Panellist:	Ewan Jones

Sylwedyddion/Observers:

**Joanne Smith [SRD, Planning]
Tom Woolley, [N Ireland MAG]
Rhiannon Griffiths [UWE]**

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

This proposal was originally part of the outline application for St Davids 2, granted in 2005. Since then the site has been cleared and is currently in use as a temporary car park. This scheme includes a permanent car park of 500 spaces for the John Lewis store. The main use is residential, and there is the potential to include student residential and other university accommodation, as well as a hotel. The design team are currently working on getting the right balance of uses.

The planning application is divided into two phases, with a detailed application for Phase 1 [between Pellet Street and Garth Street] consisting mainly of residential use over retail and car parking; and a outline application for the whole site indicating a range of possible uses. A split massing opens up the site and gives the opportunity for visual cues from the road and railway line. Phase 1 includes two towers of 24 and 22 storeys to the north west and south east of the site respectively. The former tower is slightly twisted to align with Churchill Way and to exploit views of city. Facade materials include metal rainscreen panels to soften the elevations and mark the entrance. It is hoped to start on site in September 2009 with a two year contract.

Sustainability considerations have been taken into account and informed the orientation of the blocks. A community heating system is an aspiration, but will depend on the final mix of uses. The development as a whole will aim to achieve Eco Homes Very Good [or equivalent] and BREEAM Very Good for non-residential uses over 1000 m². A further aim is to reduce carbon emissions by 10% over and above the requirements of the Building Regulations 2006. A transport analysis has been carried out and predicts minor impacts, well within the capacity of the existing road junctions. There are good public transport links and a high level of cycle storage is included in the scheme.

In the view of the local authority the proposed uses are acceptable. There is concern over certain design issues, such as the competing nature of the towers which they think require more differentiation, and the blank facades. The mix of active / inactive frontage on Adam Street is not favoured, and the main [north west] corner needs more animation.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

The Panel asked for clarification on the increased quantum of development compared with the outline consent and established that the number of units had been increased by 10-12%. We noted that structural details were not shown on the plans, but were assured that there had been input from a structural engineer and that transfer beams would be used. Nevertheless we thought it odd that columns below towers were identically sized to podium columns.

We were informed that a wind analysis had been carried out and had led to the inclusion of mitigation measures in the form of trees and canopies. There was no specific information available on the severity of the wind funnelling and we would like to see this defined, irrespective of the proposed mitigation. The Panel found little evidence of the recognition of solar orientation. Given that a solar study had also been carried out, we could not see the justification for the relatively large number of North facing apartments.

The Panel had major concerns with the likely quality of the podium space, its potential amenity value and the privacy of residents at this level. We thought there was the danger of introducing all the disadvantages of 1960s deck access blocks, unless positive moves were made to counteract this and provide quality landscaping, finishes and maintenance. The issue of how to deal with the impact of noise and vehicle emissions on residents from a 24 hour car park with 500 spaces, is vitally important and does not appear to have been addressed.

The access to residential units is convoluted, and although we were told that the letting agents had found the podium solution acceptable, we would like to see more entrance space on the ground floor. We thought that one entrance point for 300 units was not adequate. We were informed that the car park client wanted to minimise the number of cores taken through the car park. However, we thought that a greater number of cores needed to be taken to ground level, to ease fire escape and fire-fighting design and help introduce pedestrian activity to the side elevations.

The Panel struggled to understand the underlying architectural concept. The design team stated that it was based on a family of towers, which minimised their impact by shifting the blocks in plan and section. It was claimed that the creation of simple forms and the massing arrangement made the scheme distinctive but the Panel was not convinced. We thought that the architectural approach was fundamentally unsuccessful and needed to be reconsidered. We suggested that the scheme could be conceived as a series of linked buildings, rather than two towers on a podium.

A major concern of the Panel was the inhospitable nature of the surrounding public realm, particularly around the termination of the footbridge at the dead

end of Pellet Street. We thought that the Local Authority should take the lead in ensuring that this area was made safe and attractive, and in deciding on the final position of the new footbridge, possibly linking it directly to the new building. The Panel considered that the current pedestrian crossing on Adam Street should be relocated to coincide with the major pedestrian route across the footbridge, along Pellet Street and into the city centre. We understood that there were potential problems with this relocation, but we believed strongly that pedestrian convenience and safety should be paramount, with pedestrian needs taking priority over those of vehicular traffic; pedestrians will cross Adam Street on this desire line, whether or not a safe crossing is provided.

The Panel agreed with the Local Authority that the front elevation on Adam Street should have active uses all the way up, and the car park should not intrude on to this elevation. The floating screen did nothing to ameliorate this intrusion and appeared over-scaled and insensitive. We would like to see the potential for decked, underground parking explored further.

The Panel emphasised that the sustainability strategy should be specified and agreed before planning consent is granted. We urged the team to commit to the BREEAM Excellent standard for all non-residential uses and to Code Level 4 for residential uses. Minimum standards will apply to the affordable component in any event. We supported the aim for 10% reduction in carbon emissions and the suggested community heating scheme, but we advised that more needed to be done to meet the WAG aspiration for all buildings to be zero carbon by 2011.

The Panel thought that the servicing arrangements necessary for some large A3 units were insufficiently detailed and these should be progressed to ensure that they do not conflict with the layout of the car park or, more importantly, pedestrian access over the footbridge.

Crynodb/Summary

The Panel recognise the difficulty of the brief, and the way in which the requirements for the car park have - regrettably - led to some of the problems with the design and layout. We consider this proposal to be an unacceptable response to the site and the brief, and offer the following recommendations:

- The elevational treatments need to be reconsidered, and more verticality introduced. The screens should be dispensed with and the car park layout re-arranged to give active uses over the whole of the Adam Street frontage.
- We appreciate the widening of Pellet Street and the angled corner building, but much more work needs to be done to create an attractive and civilised pedestrian thoroughfare over the new footbridge, down Pellet Street and across Adam Street. The Local Authority needs to

help drive this and a fully coordinated scheme needs to form part of the application process.

- We think the architectural approach is fundamentally unsuccessful and requires revision. We do not agree that there needs to be a consistency of materials with other recent developments in this area.
- We are concerned by the likely quality of the podium space and the convoluted access arrangements. The control of noise and emissions from the car park needs to be addressed urgently.
- We think that there should be more entrance points located at ground level.
- We would like to see a greater commitment to minimum standards of sustainability and an anticipation of the zero carbon aspiration. The orientation of the blocks and the internal layouts should respond better to solar access.

Diwedd/End

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