

**Statws/Status:**

**Cyhoeddus / Public**

DESIGN  
COMMISSION  
FOR WALES  
COMISIWN  
DYLUNIO  
CYMRU

<b>Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: Design Review Report:</b>	<b>26 March 2008</b>
<b>Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Meeting Date:</b>	<b>12 March 2008</b>
<b>Lleoliad/Location:</b>	<b>Bryn House, Gower</b>
<b>Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun Scheme Description:</b>	<b>Residential</b>
<b>Cleient/Asiant: Client/Agent:</b>	<b>Louisa Morgan</b>
<b>Developer/Datblygwr:</b>	<b>As above</b>
<b>Pensaer/Architect:</b>	<b>PCKO Architects [Andrew Ogorzalek]</b>
<b>Ymgynghorwyr Cynllunio: Planning Consultants:</b>	<b>None appointed</b>
<b>Awdurdod Cynllunio: Planning Authority:</b>	<b>CC Swansea [David Gill, Tom Gronow]</b>
<b>Statws Cynllunio: Planning Status:</b>	<b>Planning application submitted July 2007</b>
<b>Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/ Design Review Panel: Wendy Richards (cadeirydd/chair) Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer) Charlie Deng (swyddog/officer)</b>	<b>Lyn Owen Richard Parnaby Kedrick Davies</b>

**Lead Panellist:**

**Richard Parnaby**

**Sylwedyddion/Observers:**

**Peter Ashby, Cadw**

### **Cyflwyniad/Presentation**

The site is located near the village of Penmaen on the Gower in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The site slopes to the south and has the advantage of spectacular views across to Three Cliffs Bay. Existing trees and vegetation provide substantial shelter and a buffer zone along the northern boundary. It is proposed to remove the existing house on the site which has been derelict for a number of years and is of poor architectural quality.

The new building is located in the same position as the existing building and responds to the topography of the site by stepping down the slope in two sections. The southern section is curved to the north west to exploit the views and protect privacy. The main living spaces are located to the south behind a highly glazed facade, and linked by a spine corridor, running east/west, to the service zone and bedrooms to the north. The northern wall is highly insulated with relatively little fenestration and the first floor bedrooms access a deck on top of the single storey living accommodation.

Natural daylight and solar gain will be maximised by the southerly orientation, and sliding timber shutters will provide shading. The rear corridor will act as a solar chimney providing natural ventilation. The two storey block will have a green roof, all solid walls will be of local stone and all demolition materials will be reused in the new building. Solar water heating and solar photovoltaic panels will be included.

The Local Authority representative stated that they have an overall policy duty to preserve the natural environment, as the site is located within an AONB. They have examined and accepted the case for demolition. They appreciate the well founded design philosophy and are aware of the excellent track record of both the architect and the client in achieving successful developments. The way in which the building responds to the landscape, and the commitment to sustainability, are seen as positive factors. It is the officer's intention to approve this application subject to certain conditions.

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

The Panel was pleased to support this proposal. We considered it to be a good example of a contemporary interpretation of the established tradition of modernist design. The Panel was particularly impressed by the way in which the designers had used the strong landscape context and an explicit environmental strategy as generators of the design. We thought that it would be vitally important to maintain the proposed quality of detailing in the finished building.

In the context of our overall support for this proposal, we raised some queries about detailed design issues. The Panel noted that the proposed house is located in the same place as the existing house and asked whether the design team had considered any other positions on the relatively large site. We were informed that the site of the existing building was ideal in terms of an already created, sheltered plateau with excellent views.

The Panel queried the number of access points and the architect explained that there were two frontages to this building, one accessed from the road to the rear of the property and one from the private courtyard to the west. The access from the road was designed to give a slice of view through the house to the Bay. An inner draught lobby and buffer zone was provided at first floor level and there would be cloakroom space for outer clothing. The Panel pointed out, and the architect acknowledged, that the stairs as shown on the ground floor plan did not work in terms of head room.

The Panel thought that the sustainability strategy appeared over-complicated and we questioned the apparent lack of draught proofing and zoning at ground floor level. It was confirmed that the main ground floor living rooms were open to the corridor, apart from the formal dining room and the study. It was acknowledged that there would need to be some mechanical ventilation but that it would incorporate heat recovery. We were informed that the solar panels would be located on the balustrade of the terrace, but we queried the angle shown on the drawings and thought that this was not optimal. Additional pipes for pre-heating domestic hot water would be located under the sun deck. The intention is to achieve Code Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

The architect explained that the 'random rubble' stone recovered from the existing building would be selected and machined to create horizontal courses in the new walls. We noted that the tree canopy appeared to be overhanging the proposed building and it was agreed that some lopping may be necessary. We advised that this should be undertaken sensitively if required and that tree roots should be protected, and also that irrigation of the green roof may need to be considered, although it would be planted with locally prevalent species.

The Panel noted that national planning guidance supports innovative architecture unless inappropriate in the particular setting, and that one of the examples used in TAN12 to demonstrate this point was from rural Pembrokeshire. We considered that the design

approach shown here was entirely appropriate in its context and respected the landscape, and the characteristics and amenity of neighbouring properties.

### **Crynodeb/Summary**

The Panel welcomed the opportunity to review this proposal and commended the ambition of the client to create a piece of good contemporary architecture in a rural setting. We support the quality of the architecture and its response to the site and context, and we think that it is entirely acceptable as a planning application and has the potential to become exemplary, subject to the achievement of the aspirations for high quality materials and detailing. We hope that this opinion will give the Local Authority greater confidence in dealing with this and similar applications in the future. In particular:

- We welcome the sustainability aspirations, the commitment to Code level 4, and the passive solar design approach. We doubt that the angle of the solar panels as shown, will optimise their performance.
- We think that there should be more lobbying of external doors and/or zoning of internal rooms to prevent unnecessary heat loss.
- We advise that a landscape architect should be consulted and a tree protection zone established, to avoid damage to tree roots.

### **Diwedd/End**

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