

Statws/Status:

Cyhoeddus / Public



Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: Design Review Report:	29 April 2008
Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Meeting Date:	16 April 2008
Lleoliad/Location:	Land near Glandwr, Pembrokeshire
Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun Scheme Description:	Eco-village. Residential and agricultural
Cleient/Asiant: Client/Agent:	Lammas Low Impact Initiatives Ltd [Simon Dale, Paul Wimbush, Larch Maxey, CW Owen]
Developer/Datblygwr:	As above
Pensaer/Architect:	Air Architecture [Robin Campbell]
Ymgynghorwyr Cynllunio: Planning Consultants:	n/a
Awdurdod Cynllunio: Planning Authority:	Pembrokeshire CC [David Popplewell]
Statws Cynllunio: Planning Status:	Full planning application re-submitted Feb 08
Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/ Design Review Panel: Alan Francis (cadeirydd/chair) Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer) Charlie Deng (swyddog/officer)	Jonathan Adams Michael Griffiths Phil Roberts

Ashley Bateson

Lead Panellist:

Ashley Bateson

Sylwedyddion/Observers:

Mark Hand, Newport CC

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

This project aims to create an exemplary low-impact settlement in rural Pembrokeshire. All aspects of the scheme have been informed by an ambition to create a living and working community which responds to the requirements for environmental, social and economic sustainability. The proposal is to create nine smallholdings with homes and agricultural buildings, and the Lammis Group have set themselves high standards for production and relative self-sufficiency. All the housing will be self-built and the community hub building is the only one to have had professional design input. The group is very conscious of the need for rural regeneration and affordable housing and their estimated costs per house are approximately £60,000.

The planning application is currently out to public consultation. The previous application was refused on grounds 2, 6 and 7 of Pembrokeshire County Council's rural exceptions policy [policy 52]. These criteria concern the likely impact of the development, whether 75% of the needs of residents will be met from land based activity, and whether there is a functional requirement for all those involved. The case officer stated that they would be looking for a distinctive vernacular approach.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

The Panel thought that the project as a whole was inspirational and we commended the commitment and enthusiasm of the group. Our assessment was greatly helped by the excellent physical models provided. The challenge will be to ensure long term success and to avoid unnecessary risk which could threaten that success. In our view it would be important to learn lessons from previous examples of low impact living and community self-build, and not to try to 're-invent the wheel'. We suggested that some element of continuing professional involvement would be useful, as a guiding hand, and the adoption of a code or guidelines would set acceptable parameters while allowing for individual solutions which were robust and resilient. The building policy already proposed by the group could be developed and expanded to include design and build quality.

The Panel was concerned that this proposal should not be used as a precedent for other less principled developments. There would need to be a legal planning mechanism to ensure delivery as proposed, to avoid setting such a precedent, and it was agreed that a comprehensive Section 106 agreement would be necessary. We questioned to what extent the scheme met local housing needs and were told that a vacant plot had recently been advertised locally but without success. The group stated that they have been careful to listen to local views, and the size of the scheme has been reduced as a result. They will be opening up local footpaths and using the community hub as a local resource. The Panel thought that there was still a danger of exclusivity, while recognising the strict requirements for residence laid down by the planning policy. We emphasised the need for continuing engagement with the existing community and dissemination of information about the project.

The Panel asked why the group had chosen a greenfield site in Pembrokeshire, rather than, for example, an ex-industrial area in need of regeneration. The group explained that the planning policy which might allow development of this sort had arisen in Pembrokeshire. They had been approached by the landowner and reached an agreement that they would purchase the land once planning permission had been obtained. It was confirmed that the new vehicular access has been discussed with and approved by the Highways Department since the previous application.

The Panel raised the question of what makes these buildings specifically Welsh. We welcomed the use of locally sourced and distinct materials in order to make the buildings rooted in the site. These local references will need to be re-interpreted within the parameters set by the demand for high environmental performance and passive solar design. We believe it is possible to reconcile these different influences and achieve a contemporary solution and we think a neo-vernacular approach should be avoided. It was noted that while policy 52 does not refer specifically to aesthetic issues, it sits within a raft of other policies which deal with design and amenity. The visual impact of the proposal had previously been considered acceptable.

Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel welcomed the opportunity to review this significant and inspiring project. We very much want to see it succeed and become an exemplar of low impact development; and we hope that the Local Authority will have the confidence to support and work with the group to achieve this. We find the concept commendable but we think there needs to be further work to develop a detailed design strategy. In summary:

- We advise the group to seek ongoing professional support, in terms of design and environmental services. Together with learning the lessons from previous experimental and pioneering schemes, we think this will help to de-risk the project and ensure its success.

- We think the design of the community hub building works well and we would like to see that same approach translated into some of the other buildings. We think that an element of standardisation in the design and construction would ease the process of development and reduce costs.
- We applaud the commitment to and strategy for achieving minimal impact and energy use, but we would stress the importance of robust functionality and the dissemination of positive practical results.
- We welcome the encouragement of local community access and involvement, which needs to be continued and expanded. If possible the provision of housing for local people should be included as part of the development.

Diwedd/End

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