

Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

Review Status: **Public**

Meeting date:	20th May 2009
Issue Date:	3rd June 2009
Scheme Location:	Kings Lane Warehouse, Swansea
Scheme Description:	Leisure
Planning Status:	Pre-application

Part1: Presentation

Swansea Print Workshop has been in need of new premises for some years and in 2004 they were offered a partnership by Swansea Housing Association [now Coastal Housing] through which to develop a 19th century stone warehouse. The aspiration was that this refurbished building would become an integral part of a future cultural hub and 'urban village' centred around the historic Kings Lane. SPW's preference is for a conversion of the existing building, rather than a new build solution on the site.

This proposal would house a printmaking workshop; gallery and cafe; large drawing and lecture space; and a series of artist and residency studios to let. The main entrance is shown off Kings Lane, because of the uncertainty over the proposed housing site to the North [owned by Coastal Housing], as well as the desire to restore some presence and pedestrian flow to the lane. SPW hope to retain control of a roof terrace built over a new commercial unit on the south east corner of the site for outside events.

The Local Authority representative noted that there is outline consent for the Coastal Housing site, but no fixed quantum or scale of development. The Parc Tawe area to the East is part of the wider City Centre Framework, and will have its own development brief. They welcome the proposed use and re-use of the existing building, and await a more detailed proposal.

Summary of key points arising from discussion, to be read in conjunction with Part 2 of this report.

The Panel is very supportive of this proposal, based on the clear presentation of a strong design concept to insert a new structure into the existing shell. We think it has the potential to become an exemplar project which sets new standards for design quality and

the adaptation of historic buildings, and we trust that it will act as a catalyst for the generation of a new 'cultural quarter' in Swansea. In summary:

- The multi-layered, 'palimpsest' design approach yields a successful integration of new design elements with the existing building.
- In general we support the architectural treatment, although some Panellists thought some 'calming' of the elevations might be beneficial.
- Interesting interior spaces are created by an efficient, multi-level layout, appropriate distribution of uses, and a sensitive response to the brief and site topography.
- The historic character of Kings Lane is preserved and enhanced by the proposals creating activity, interest and drama. The main entrance is well located to achieve the revitalisation of the street.
- The project is dependent on the support of the RSL, both for funding and for the delivery of an adjacent scheme which would complement and not overpower this building. The 12 storey tower and flats above three storeys of open car parking shown in the drawings would not be an appropriate setting for the Printworks.
- We welcome the intention to re-use building materials and elements, and we urge the team to commit to a BREEAM Excellent rating.
- The presentation material should include some more distant views and photomontage elevations showing the proposed scheme in its context.

Part 2: Discussion and Panel Response in Full

This is a strong, bold design concept, carried through with rigour and convincing details, which fits well with the client's aspirations. We have confidence in the ability of the design team to deliver this concept, given that the lead panellist has visited the Siobhan Davies Dance Centre in London by the same architect. The 'palimpsest' design approach, revealing multiple historic layers reflecting different eras and uses is particularly successful.

The operational layout makes good use of the interior volume, increasing the internal floor area with multi-level spaces, and provides a sensitive response to the existing staircase, door and window openings. However, there needs to be more WCs for the public particularly on the ground floor. We were assured that the staircase arrangement serving the residential units was satisfactory for fire protection, given the protected lobby.

The Panel was convinced by the explanation for the asymmetry of the roof, as reflecting the slight kink in the building and the eccentricity of the existing plan. The design intention is to celebrate the lack of order and to make use of whatever technologies work in a given context. There is a danger that the elevations will appear too 'busy', and the impact of the raised roof and increased height of this building on the context of the lane and the buildings opposite will need careful monitoring, as indeed will the plan to use salvaged floorboards for the cladding of the upper floor.

The historic character of Kings Lane should be preserved, although any attempt to pedestrianise it would negate the service access for this building. We support the location of the main entrance onto the lane and the potential use of projecting steel ties from which to hang colourful banners. The main entrance could be made more legible by using the old goods entrance, or creating a new shop window or porch.

The Panel welcomed the innovative re-use of materials and elements from the old building, and the intention to design and specify for low maintenance and long life. We would like to see the team aim for a high BREEAM rating – for this refurbishment project an ‘Excellent’ rating would be appropriate - and to achieve standards of insulation and air tightness well in excess of Building Regulations 2006. Solar water heating would be an appropriate renewable technology, but an even better option would be to connect to a wider district heating network if the Coastal Housing scheme installs one. Rainwater storage and re-use would complement the high water use involved in the printmaking process, but consideration should be given to the optimum size of the storage tank and the energy demand from pumps.

There are key medium distance views from across the River Tawe and the eccentric roofline appears to fit well into the backdrop of the premises on High Street, but this is an assumption and needs to be ratified by a long elevation and photomontage.

A major concern relates to the uncertainty as to the nature of the adjacent housing development, which could have a major impact on this proposal. If it does not proceed, this scheme may be affected in terms of daylight, access, the availability of car parking facilities and external exhibition space. The viability of the corner retail unit on the Strand under the proposed roof garden also remains in the balance, but could benefit from the redevelopment of Parc Tawe. The funding and ultimate success of this scheme depends on the goodwill and support of the RSL. Total costs have been estimated at £5.4 million and the project has been identified for European convergence funding.

Certainly this refurbishment project will enhance the locality, provide a significant cultural asset and attraction and conserve an important remnant of Swansea’s historic Strand.

The Design Commission for Wales Design Review Panel and staff welcome further consultation and will be happy to provide further feedback on this report and/or where appropriate, to receive further presentations. Thank you for consulting the Commission and please keep in touch with us about the progress of your project.

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

Appendix 1: Attendees

Asiant/Client/Datblygwr: Agent/Client/Developer	Swansea Print Workshop [Jackie Ford]
Pensaer/Architect:	Sarah Wigglesworth Architects [Sarah Wigglesworth]
Consultants:	n/a
Awdurdod Cynllunio/ Planning Authority	City and Council of Swansea [Steve Smith]

Y Panel Adlygu Dylunio:

Design review panel:

John Punter [Chair]

Cindy Harris [Officer]

Simon Carne

Michael Griffiths

Roger Ayton

Asley Bateson

Kedrick Davies

Lead Panellist:

Michael Griffiths