

# Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

## Review Status: **Public**

Meeting date:	22 July 2009
Issue Date:	31 July 2009
Scheme Location:	Park Avenue, Aberystwyth
Scheme Description:	Retail and hotel
Planning Status:	Application submitted April 2009

## Part1: Presentation

Aldi have been seeking an opportunity to develop in Aberystwyth since 2005. A previous application was eventually withdrawn and Aldi were advised to pursue a mixed use, multi storey development. This scheme responds to that advice and to the emerging aspirations for this part of Aberystwyth, contained in the Ceredigion County Council consultation draft masterplan document for Aberystwyth prepared by LDA Design and more specifically the site development brief prepared for this site.

This proposal is for a 1500 sqm supermarket, with two storeys of hotel accommodation above. Active frontage to Park Avenue is provided with a fully glazed facade at ground level. The hotel entrance accentuates the eastern corner and responds to the police station opposite.

A Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method [BREEAM] Very Good standard will be achieved via good daylight levels, efficient lighting, heat recovery from refrigeration systems and Aldi's policy of locating its stores within town centres. A similar standard will be achieved for the proposed hotel.

The Local Planning Authority [LPA] are awaiting further information and response from their highways department and the Environment Agency. Local concerns have been expressed over inadequate provision for car parking. The LPA have commissioned Atkins to comment on the transport assessment, and LDA design to comment on the proposed building and urban design and how it fits with the masterplan. The report prepared by LDA Design was described as generally favourable by the LPA, although the Panel did not have sight of it. Specifically, LDA recommended: greater definition and enclosure of Park Avenue; use of genuinely local stone in boundary walls; a higher quality treatment on the eastern corner; and greater scale on the south east elevation. The LPA identified the need for local distinctiveness as a major issue.

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

The Panel was pleased to note the positive use being made of the masterplan and site development brief to influence future development in the town. We support the principle of locating food stores within town centres. However, we cannot support this proposal for the following reasons:

- The architectural treatment is not of sufficiently high quality to meet the aspirations contained in the masterplan, nor does it address the block as one building.
- There is a lack of local distinctiveness and material references in the corporate cladding system proposed.
- The design has begun to address the eastern corner but needs developing further.
- More active frontage and increased scale is desirable on the south east frontage.
- The sustainability strategy for the store needs to be integrated and delivered for the block as a whole.
- The flat roof should be used to provide increased amenity for guests and daylighting for the store below.
- The site constraints and the resultant developable area results in an unsatisfactory design solution.

### **Part 2: Discussion and Panel Response in Full**

The project team have explored alternative uses to combine with the retail element, and found that there was no local demand for office use and very little for new residential. They have sought to respond to LDA's comments by developing the four sided 'doughnut' form and by increasing active ground floor frontage as identified in the masterplan.

The Panel considered that the proposal did not demonstrate the high quality, in terms of site layout and architectural treatment, required to meet the aspiration of the Local Authority as contained in the masterplan. The Aldi corporate system of imported painted concrete panels did not incorporate local materials of 'render, brick and slate', nor did it reflect local distinctiveness, although this system was claimed to have a good track record and be easy to maintain. We did not think that the suggestion to apply feature timber panels was appropriate, and advised that composite timber/aluminium windows should be used in preference to pure aluminium.

The elevational treatment should reflect a greater integration between the two main uses. We agree with LDA that the treatment of the eastern corner needs significant revision to deliver an improved quality. The flat roof in the centre of the block could be developed as a green roof and external courtyard to give an additional amenity for hotel guests and/or help with daylighting to the store below.

Ideally guests should be encouraged to spend time in the town and links with the town centre and seafront should be improved, although we acknowledged that this was more a matter for the Local Authority.

It was suggested that the service area might be better located facing the football ground and accessed through the car park, so that the south eastern frontage could be developed to enclose the street and provide a more positive frontage facing the police station. The team pointed out that due to leasehold restrictions they were unable to build in the central part of the site.

The constrained site results in a difficulty in delivering a scheme of this nature and it may be expedient for the LPA to review the guidance for this area in order to establish the best way of achieving the stated objectives. The 1500 sqm floor area of the supermarket is too large for the site, if there is to be any possibility of the development to have active frontages on all four sides. A smaller shop area could allow space around the perimeter for residential or commercial uses, and would require less servicing and therefore possibly no service yard.

The Panel welcomed the commitment to achieve BREEAM Very Good for the store, and the assurance that similar standards would apply to any contractual arrangement made with a hotel operator. We suggested that solar thermal panels would be appropriate for the demands of a hotel and could be located on the flat roof / courtyard.

**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	Aldi Stores Ltd [Phillip Warner]
Pensaer/Architect:	Powell Dobson Architects [David Lumley]
Consultants:	Turley Associates [Dan Templeton]
Awdurdod Cynllunio/ Planning Authority	Ceredigion CC [Huw Davies, Russell Hughes-Pickering]
Y Panel Adlygu Dylunio: Design review panel: Wendy Richards [Chair] Cindy Harris [Officer] Jonathan Adams Phil Roberts	Kedrick Davies David Harvey Steve Smith

Lead Panellist:

Jonathan Adams

Sylwedyddion/Observers:

Councillors:

Paul Hinge

Moelfryn Maskell

Odwyn Davies

Ray Quant

Gareth Lloyd