

Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

Review Status: **Public**

Meeting date:	14th October 2009
Issue Date:	29th October 2009
Scheme Location:	City Vizion, Newport
Scheme Description:	Residential
Planning Status:	Application submitted August 2009

Part1: Presentation

The site is an existing builders yard, and would be Phase 2 of a larger residential scheme, originally known as City Reach and reviewed by DCFW in August and November 2006. Phase 1 to the south is already built and occupied. This proposal is for 122 dwelling units and 255 m² of commercial space. This is a more modest but deliverable scheme compared to the extant consent for 226 units.

The site layout is organised around a boulevard linking the arrival space at the termination of the footbridge with the Rodney Parade rugby ground, and fronted by townhouses which provide natural surveillance. The riverside walkway also has active frontages and a cafe is proposed on the plaza adjacent to the footbridge.

The Local Authority is concerned to maintain the proposed quality of the river frontage, the plaza and boulevard. They have doubts about the environmental quality of the rear courtyards, and the nature of the proposed boundary treatments. The link to Colne St to the north should be made safe and attractive. Issues relating to servicing and disabled parking remain to be resolved.

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

The Panel welcomed the proposed regeneration of this part of Newport. We were pleased to note the element of mixed use, along with the character of the waterfront, boulevard and the arrival square. We could support this proposal provided that the following major issues are resolved:

- The environment of the rear courtyards is likely to be bleak and unwelcoming. They need to be made more secure and enclosed, with good natural surveillance, better landscape and communal amenity space.
- To this end, the disposition of parking, green space and FOGs needs to be revised. A detailed landscape plan should form part of the proposals.
- The corner blocks fronting the public open space at the eastern end of the boulevard should be wrapped around the corners to create better enclosure of the rear courtyards and better surveillance of the street.
- We are not wholly convinced by the orientation and alignment of the boulevard, which has an arbitrary relationship with the rugby ground, and which divides the development site into two awkward shaped plots. This should be reconsidered, to improve the layout and buildability of the plot to the north.
- The client/developer should commit to achieving CSH Level 3 as a minimum.

Part 2: Discussion and Panel Response in Full

The Panel welcomed the proposed mix of uses, and the strong link provided by the pedestrianised boulevard. We think the proposed scale is appropriate and we are pleased to note that most residential units have dual aspect.

Our main concern is with the quality of the rear courtyards. These are likely to be bleak with no natural surveillance, despite the occasional 'flats over garages' [FOGs]. There is no proper landscape strategy to create usable amenity space or mitigate the dominance of car parking. Currently there are too many access points into the rear courtyards and the strategy of passive security is not convincing. The relationship with the end of Colne Street is awkward.

The courtyards should be made more animated and civilised by including more communal open space and reducing the area of private gardens. The example of Swansea Point was cited to show that this approach could be successful. We thought there was scope to 'de-clutter' the courtyards and rationalise the parking and garages to improve openness and sightlines.

The two corner blocks at the eastern end of the boulevard should provide a more continuous frontage to wrap around the courtyards and enclose the public space better. The blank, 3 storey gable end of Block 109-114 faces the main approach from the rugby ground to the northeast and does not adequately overlook the public space. We were informed that some of the FOGs on Rodney Road will be re-elevated and the road itself may be pedestrianised at this point, but a much more effective residential enclosure is needed.

The proposed orientation of the boulevard should be reconsidered, and the justification for breaking the predominant orthogonal layout should be re-examined. The proposed layout delivers awkward sized and shaped development plots either side of the boulevard, and has no relationship with the existing residential area to the north. If the boulevard were re-aligned to meet the eastern plaza more centrally, this would give a better shaped plot for development to the north.

Given the security issues arising from the movement of large crowds of people on match days and relatively light pedestrian movement at other times, it would have been better to develop a site layout based on defensible perimeter blocks. The boulevard could possibly be made wider to include on-street parking, but still retaining pedestrian priority.

The Panel urged the team to commit to a minimum of Code for Sustainable Homes level 3, which is broadly equivalent to EcoHomes Very Good. The distribution of affordable housing is under discussion with the Housing Association involved. The original intention is that it would be pepper potted and the Panel would support this approach.

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	Taylor Wimpey WAG; DE&T [Lydia Haskey]
Pensaer/Architect:	Roberts Limbrick [Joe Roberts, Aaron Terry]
Consultants:	Asbri Planning [Robin Williams]
AwdurdodCynllunio/ Planning Authority	Newport City Council [Andrew Dawe]
Y Panel Adlygu Dylunio: Design review panel: John Punter [Chair] Cindy Harris [Officer] Ann-Marie Smale	Lynne Sullivan Glen Dyke Martin Knight Steve Smith
Lead Panellist:	Lynne Sullivan
Sylwedyddion/Observers:	Toby Adam [DCFWD] Chris Jones [DCFWD]