

Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

Review Status: Public

Meeting date:	18th August 2010
Issue Date:	26th August 2010
Scheme Location:	Llanwern Regeneration site
Scheme Description:	Residential/Mixed use. Sub-area masterplan
Planning Status:	Planning Application submitted

Part1: Presentation

This proposed sub-area masterplan relates to the western third of the main Llanwern site, which has been named Glan Llyn. Outline consent for the site as a whole was granted in April 2010. One condition of that consent was the submission of sub-area masterplans which need to be agreed before detailed proposals are made for each phase of development. Condition 4 of the outline permission makes clear what these sub-area masterplans are expected to do, and is attached as an Appendix to this report.

The first phase of development includes 1250 new dwellings, a primary school, local centre, and the western park, along with associated infrastructure and open space. An agreement has been signed between St Modwens and Persimmon to develop the first 300 houses in the south western corner of the site, hopefully starting early in 2011.

The site layout is largely a response to flood risk and surface water management issues. New drainage channels and waterways were planned to allow storage for up to 48 hours, and the necessary excavations would also produce the material to raise the level of development plots. However, the calculated flood risk has now receded owing to recent flood defence works implemented on the River Usk. The size of the channels has consequently been reduced, along with variations in topography on this very flat site. The 'green grid' and waterways network will provide the framework for a series of development hamlets, with greater density towards the south.

The Local Authority noted that there was a change in the phasing plan, and the location of the local centre which will stimulate its early delivery. They note the lack of any firm commitment to environmental sustainability. More detailed concerns include the provision of surveillance for rear parking areas, and that the image on p61 would not meet their aspirations for a gateway location.

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

The Panel recognised the importance of this key strategic site for Newport and the potential for sustainable regeneration over the next few decades, with the opportunity for this development to be an exemplar sustainable community in Wales. However, we think that this proposed masterplan is fundamentally unsatisfactory and fails to meet the requirements set out in the relevant planning condition. In summary:

- Insufficient information has been presented to discharge the relevant planning conditions and to avoid the delivery of standard housebuilding products.
- There is a lack of vision and sufficient ambition for this first phase which will set parameters for all future development on the site.
- The architectural references and precedents presented were in the main not relevant and so could not inform a rigorous contextual analysis.
- A more detailed public realm strategy showing specific design quality should be developed, including a strategy for public art.
- The landscape and drainage strategy do not relate to the Gwent Levels and the pattern of reens to the south.
- The movement strategy and hierarchy should be clearly integrated with the green / blue grid. Design principles from the Manual for Streets should be a focus for the scheme.
- The sustainability strategy lacks any firm commitments and does not address basic issues for low energy design such as orientation. There needs to be a site-wide strategy to address future low and zero carbon targets.

We look forward to a continuing engagement with this project through the various stages of the planning process.

Part 2: Discussion and Panel Response in Full

The Panel recognised that this was a key strategic site, with a considerable opportunity to create a vibrant sustainable community over the next few decades and provide a Welsh exemplar for sustainable regeneration.

The Panel noted the interesting contextual analysis provided, but we struggled to find any apparent linkage between those images and this proposal. In particular, the images of the development at Portishead are not relevant in this context. This document should set out the 'big idea' for the character of the development, including the architectural approach together with relevant influences and precedents, resulting in a specific response to the local context. The planning condition referred to above requires a design approach for each development parcel which reflects and builds on identified characteristics. We need to know what these are and what distinguishes the different character areas.

In our view the application as it stands does not meet the requirements of planning condition 4. Whilst a number of plans were presented, there were no three dimensional illustrations indicating level changes / sections / the quality and contrasting size of proposed spaces within the development and we would like to see a comprehensive 3D

visualisation of the masterplan and key areas. We would have expected more comprehensive and detailed strategies for the public realm, sustainable construction, and public art at this stage. The movement strategy should reflect the green/blue grid and be based around walkability and the location of key amenities. A strategy for continuous cycle movement through the scheme needs to be developed.

Stronger guidance should be provided for this and future phases, to establish a high level of ambition for the scheme and avoid housebuilders delivering their standard product. As we advised previously, we think there would be benefits in this instance in agreeing a Design Code to set minimum standards of urban and landscape design, architecture, and sustainability. We suggested that design competitions could be held for buildings at key nodal points to introduce innovative solutions.

We regretted the move away from open watercourses and an opening up of the existing culverts, as shown in the original masterplan, towards a more engineered and linear solution of retaining the culverts with parallel drainage routes. We would like to see the organic pattern of the Gwent reens reflected in the drainage layout, and the blue / green grid used as a major driver in setting out pockets of development. The enclosed loop plan shows little or no connection with the Gwent Levels to the south.

The team confirmed that there was little chance of a new footbridge being built across the railway line to the north and we thought that the plan should therefore not show such a connection.

The sustainability strategy contains no firm commitment to achieve a particular standard of environmental performance or energy efficiency. The relevant statutory standard is now the Code for Sustainable Homes [CSH], not the National Home Energy Rating. There needs to be a firm commitment at this stage to achieve CSH Level 4 as a minimum, given the likely timespan for developing this phase and the need to futureproof the development as a whole. The changing regulatory landscape should be acknowledged and reflected in a timeline of raising standards across the site for future phases.

Surprisingly there is no mention of orientation in the strategy, nor any response to our earlier recommendation that the infrastructure for a district heating system be installed prior to the disposal of development plots. The team stated that a district heating system was not considered viable. We thought it would be a lost opportunity if the pipework to service such a scheme was not installed now, even if it was for use at a later date. We urged the team to review the viability with ESCOs [Energy Supply Companies] as we understand anecdotally that their requirements are changing and more capital funding is becoming available.

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

St Modwen Developments Ltd
[Rob Skelston]

Pensaer/Architect:

Stephen George & Partners
[Ben Williams]

Consultants:

GVA Grimley [Tim Gent]
Halcrow [Chris James]

Awdurdod Cynllunio/
Planning Authority

Newport CC [Laura Francis,
Gareth Owens]

Y Panel Adlygu Dylunio:
Design review panel:
Wendy Richards [Chair]
Cindy Harris [Officer]
Ashley Bateson

Mark Hallett
Michael Griffiths
Kieren Mrogan
Lyne Sullivan

Lead Panellist:

Mark Hallett

Sylwedyddion/Observers:

Liz Walder [RSAW]
Richard Keogh [DCFW]
Carolyn Pugsley [Freshwater]

APPENDIX 2

1.0 INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Outline planning permission (reference 06/0471) was granted on the 1st April 2010 for the mixed use redevelopment of the Llanwrn Regeneration Site. The scheme is the cornerstone of Newport's growth strategy and will deliver 4,000 new dwellings, along with a substantial new business park. It will generate 6,000 new jobs and provide 2 new primary schools, a local centre containing retail and community facilities and a significant area of new public open space and structural landscaping.

The planning permission is based on a collection of documents, including an Environmental Statement and a Development Framework, which explain the strategies and principles behind the creation of a new neighbourhood on the previously developed site.

Implementation of the development – which has been named Glan Llyn – is to be guided by a number of further documents. These include a series of masterplans which need to be agreed before detailed proposals are made for each phase of the development. Condition 4 of the outline planning permission makes clear what these sub area masterplans are expected to do. A summary of these requirements (extracted from the condition) is provided below:

"Each Sub-Area Masterplan shall accord with the parameters and objectives laid out in the Development Framework Rev.E (January 2007) and shall clearly indicate the works for

- (i) development parcels and
- (ii) infrastructure.

Each Sub-Area Masterplan shall include, where appropriate to that phase or sub-area, the following details for each phase:

- (a) details of how the phase is broken down into development parcels;
- (b) in the case of phase 2 onwards a full and detailed design analysis of the built form of adjacent previous phases and their key characteristics;

(c) a design approach for each development parcel which reflects and builds on these identified characteristics;

(d) the approximate number of residential units within each development parcel and identification of development blocks with an indication of building heights;

(e) the location of landmark buildings and key frontages;

(f) approximate housing numbers, mix and density within each development parcel;

(g) the approximate location, number and mix of affordable housing within each development parcel;

(h) off-street parking arrangements;

(i) landscaping and planting proposals and boundary treatments;

(j) areas of public open space/recreation space within each development parcel (including the lakes), indicating their function and facilities to be provided and their location;

(k) the hierarchy of access and circulation including roads, footpaths and cycleways and how these link with the surrounding area and previous phases;

(l) sustainable development standards and measures to achieve such standards within each development parcel;

(m) details of sustainable urban drainage systems/ flood compensatory/mitigation works including lakes and drainage channels".

1.2 THE WESTERN AREA

This document is the sub area master plan for the western part of the site and records the next stage in the development process. As required by the condition, it builds upon the approved development framework document and sets out the guiding design principles which will inform the character and nature