

Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

Review Status: **Confidential**

Meeting date:	21st July 2010
Issue Date:	3rd August 2010
Scheme Location:	St Brides Major
Scheme Description:	Residential
Planning Status:	Pre-application

Part1: Presentation

This proposal is for three 1-bedroom apartments on a small, steeply sloping site within the village envelope. The site is currently disused, with a little used and overgrown public footpath running through it. The land falls almost 6 metres over the 18 metre depth from east to west. The architects were given an open brief for the site and decided upon this proposal due to a lack of small apartments in the area.

The built form responds to the adjacent buildings and the site topography. A series of interlocking spaces steps up the site and defines two external courtyards. The largest one which serves two of the apartments is overlooked by the re-routed public footpath – an arrangement which is designed to encourage informal socializing and natural surveillance. Accommodation is at first floor level, with basement parking for three cars and two garage doors on the street frontage.

The original planning application was refused in February 2010, due to reasons of scale, size and layout, limited private amenity space and ultimately an over-development of the very constrained site. Further discussions between the architects and the local authority have since taken place and highways issues relating to the car parking strategy have been resolved, removing one of the garage doors.

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

The Panel supports the development of this site in principle and we have no serious concerns with a vernacular based architectural approach. However, we think this proposal

represents an overdevelopment of the site, and this is the major issue to be resolved. In summary:

- We do not think that the site can accommodate the proposed number of units while at the same time providing good quality accommodation with acceptable levels of access, natural light, orientation, privacy and external amenity space.
- We think the massing presented to Ewenny Road responds well to the character of the village.
- We are not convinced of the need for on-site parking in this situation, especially if the size of the scheme were to be reduced.
- In terms of environmental strategy, there should be a firm commitment in the planning application to achieve a particular Code level, ideally higher than the statutory minimum.

Part 2: Discussion and Panel Response in Full

The Panel found much to commend in the design approach, which responds well to the character of the neighbourhood and respects the amenity of adjacent buildings. However, whilst the presentation described the character of St Brides as “detached and semi-detached buildings ... quite suburban” the design introduces a density imported from a different context, influenced by the architect’s previous work in Kendal. We consider that the proposed quantum of development stretches the capacity of the site to an unacceptable degree for this location.

Our concerns are reinforced by the proposed size, access and daylighting of the individual units. Windows appear to be undersized and predominantly north facing. We were informed that rooflights will be used to introduce additional daylight, but the information submitted for review illustrated only two rooflights, and the lack of direct visual contact with the outside remains problematic.

The elevations and view along Ewenny Road suggested that the proposed massing to the front of the site would sit comfortably within the village, although, in detail, the large street level window into a garage should be reconsidered. We have no objection to the re-routing of the public footpath but we are not convinced that its relationship with the semi-private courtyard would work well.

Access arrangements, while meeting DQR standards, are still not ideal. Access would be difficult for less able people and virtually impossible for wheelchair users. A lift could be incorporated but would affect the financial viability of the scheme.

Given the recent planning history of the site, it is important that an attempt is made to reach an accommodation with the Local Authority, who have indicated that they would look favourably on a 2 dwelling solution. In our view, this proposal is a relatively expensive way to develop the site, with the necessary large retaining walls and basement garage being particularly costly items, and the latter resulting in a lack of active frontage at street level. A re-assessment of the financial information and a proper analysis of costs / value, may show better returns for a 1 or 2 unit development, particularly if on-site parking is not required.

Although each of the nine headings of the Code for Sustainable Homes are addressed in the design statement, we would like to see a commitment to achieve a reasonably high Code level contained in the planning application. This will be mandatory after September 1st 2010.

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

Gareth Cording

Pensaer/Architect:

Gillard Associates [Alan Gillard, Luke Davies]

Consultants:

Awdurdod Cynllunio/
Planning Authority

Vale of Glamorgan County Council

Y Panel Adlygu Dylunio:
Design review panel:
Ewan Jones [Chair]
Cindy Harris [Officer]
Phil Roberts

Glen Dyke
David Harvey
Martin Knight

Lead Panellist:

Phil Roberts

Sylwedyddion/Observers:

Trevor Skempton [DCFW Commissioner],
Representatives from Brecon Beacons
National Park Authority