

NB. This report was confidential when it was seen at pre-application stage and relates only to the version seen at that stage. It has been made public since the planning application was submitted in May 2011

# Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

## **DATGANIADAU O DDIDDORDEB**

Mae gofyn i aelodau o'r panel, arsyllwyr a phartion perthnasol eraill ddatgan unrhyw ddi-ddordebau sydd ganddynt **ymlaen llaw** mewn perthynas â'r eitemau Panel Adolygu Dylunio Bydd unrhyw ddatganiadau o'r fath yn cael eu cofnodi yma ac yng nghofnodion canolog Comisiwn Dylunio Cymru.

## **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Panel members, observers and other relevant parties are required to declare ***in advance*** any interests they may have in relation to the Design Review Agenda items. Any such declarations are recorded here and in DCfW's central records.

### **Statws adolygu/Review status**

### **Cyfrinachol/Confidential**

Dyddiad cyfarfod/meeting date	4th May 2011
Dyddiad cyhoeddi/issue date	13th May 2011
Lleoliad y cynllun/scheme location	St Teilo's CIW School, Llandeyrn, Cardiff
Disgrifiad y cynllun/scheme description	Education
Statws cynllunio/planning status	Pre-application
Datganiadau o ddi-ddordeb/declaration of interests:	
1. Mark Hallett was hosted at a lunch by Mott MacDonald six weeks ago.	
2. Last year Mark Hallett was hosted by Austin Smith Lord at the Architect of the Year award ceremony	

### **Adran 1/part 1**

### **Cyflwyniad/Presentation**

This proposal is for a new build, community focussed high school for the Church in Wales and Cardiff County Council. The site for the new building is the existing playing fields of Llandeyrn High School, which runs parallel to the A48 (Eastern Avenue). Traffic noise is a major constraint and tested noise levels on the site have exceeded 70dB.

Other constraints include a historic chapel and graveyard to the north of the site, and the decision to restrict development to the middle of the site in order to protect views from existing residential properties to the west. This was done in order to preempt any objections, given the tight time scale for the project. The existing high

school on an adjacent site will remain in operation during construction of the new building, after which time it will revert to playing fields.

Three design options were developed to concept stage and presented at stakeholder consultations. The 'street' option was strongly preferred over the alternatives developed around internal and external courtyards. The street option shows a linear block running north/south with an internal 'street' linking the car park and upper playing fields to the north and east with the playing fields to the south. This block forms a protective barrier against the main road to the east and shelters the learning blocks which taper towards a 'heart external space' or focal point.

### **Crynodeb o'r prif bwyntiau a gododd o'r drafodaeth, i'w darllen ochr yn ochr ag Adran 2 yr adroddiad hwn.**

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

The Panel appreciated the opportunity to review this scheme and welcomed the clarity of design approach outlined in the Stage B report. However, we think the development through Stage C results in an unsatisfactory solution, which is unlikely to be addressed and remedied in the time available. In summary:

- Despite the constraints of the programme, it is important to emphasise that fundamental issues of form and layout need to be addressed, and sufficient time allowed to resolve important design issues before proceeding to a planning application.
- Many of the current issues result from the attempt to squeeze the preferred form onto a restricted site, and the resulting compromises seriously detract from the quality promised in the Stage B design concepts.
- We have particular concerns over the uses and integration of the courtyard spaces, the architectural resolution of the teaching blocks, and the intimidating and overbearing aspect of the main entrance facade.
- We think that the sustainability strategy could be improved and the areas of mechanical ventilation further reduced, by adopting more of a PassivHaus approach. Any reference to zero carbon buildings needs to be justified or omitted from the documentation.
- The street is too long and narrow to work well as a social space, and its orientation and high level of glazing will make it difficult to protect from overheating.
- A strong landscape strategy is vital to tie the scheme together and resolve some of the difficulties with the external spaces. The built form should be used to provide security with accessibility, and internal courtyard spaces should not be gated.
- Microclimatic studies of the courtyards should be carried out urgently and allowed to inform the design development.
- A planning application on the 23rd May would be premature and we strongly recommend that this be deferred.

The Panel considered that the Stage B report set out the design options in a comprehensive way and with a simple clarity which promised a well resolved design. However, the Stage C report shows these simple diagrams being squeezed and compressed in an effort to accommodate the site constraints and fit the preferred diagram onto the restricted site. To a certain extent these constraints are self-imposed and we would challenge the decision to maintain views for surrounding residents at all costs, especially if this is driving an unsatisfactory resolution of the built form. An alternative solution might be sought in a denser footprint and an increase in scale. However, the timescale of a planning application within a few weeks would make it impossible to resolve these important design issues.

The tapered teaching blocks create wedge shaped external spaces which may be difficult to manage, although there will be some passive supervision from the glazed street. It will be important to encourage active uses in these spaces, and any suggestion of gating them off should be resisted. A solar access and wind study should be carried out for the courtyard spaces, and they should also be tested for sound defraction and possible unexpected consequences of the acoustic mitigation strategy.

The teaching blocks themselves need greater architectural clarity and rationalisation. The current variation in length, depth and orientation looks disordered and lacks the cohesion and logic of the stage B drawings. We did not agree with the argument that this disparity was an aid to legibility. We had doubts about the location of the sports block, which has the effect of lengthening the street and is very close to existing residential properties.

The squeezed form has increased the length of the entrance elevation - the 'fortified edge' – and exaggerated the contrast with the inner sheltered areas, resulting in an aggressive appearance to the main frontage facing south east. We thought this could be oppressive and intimidating especially for younger children, and certainly does not present 'an entrance area that is outwardly welcoming and friendly' as stated in the Stage C report. The pinch point created with the residential properties to the north is very uncomfortable and we had concerns about the entrance area impinging on the graveyard.

The effect of squeezing the form also means that the street itself has become very long and thin, with no break out spaces or allowance for informal social gatherings. In our view it will be difficult to prevent overheating in this predominantly west facing and highly glazed space without the use of mechanical ventilation.

The Panel suggested that the team research examples of schools built on noisy sites which have used the PassivHaus model to resolve the conflict between natural

ventilation and acoustic protection. We understood that a BREEAM Excellent rating is a funding requirement and will be achieved along with an EPC rating of 'A'. However, there are references in the documentation to carbon neutrality and a zero carbon building in use, which are not borne out in the design. These aspirations should be clearly defined in this context and either committed to or rejected.

A strong landscape strategy is needed to develop the courtyard spaces and integrate them with the 'heart' focal point. This could also help to civilise the entrance area, and to demarcate and acknowledge the site of the historic chapel and graveyard. Boundary treatments should be used to encourage public access along recognised routes and desire lines, and six foot high fences should be avoided where possible, using the buildings themselves to enclose areas and provide security.

**Mae Panel Adolygu Dylunio Comisiwn Dylunio Cymru a'r staff yn croesawu rhagor o ymgynghoriad, a bydd yn hapus i ddarparu rhagor o adborth am yr adroddiad yma a/neu lle bo'n briodol, dderbyn cyflwyniadau pellach. Diolch am ymgynghori â'r Comisiwn a chadwch mewn cysylltiad â ni os gwelwch yn dda ynglŷn â hynt eich prosiect. A fyddech gystal â'n hysbysu o ddatblygiad eich prosiect. Diolch yn fawr am ymgynghori â'r Comisiwn.**

**The Design Commission for Wales Design Review Panel welcomes further consultation and we will be happy to provide further feedback on this report and/or where appropriate, to receive further presentations. Please keep us informed of the progress of your project. Thank you for consulting the Commission.**

***Mae copi iath Gymraeg o'r adroddiad hwn ar gael ar ofyn.  
A Welsh language copy of this report is available upon request.***

#### **Atodiad 1/appendix 1 Mynychwyr/attendees**

Asiant/Client/Datblygwr Agent/Client/Developer	Cardiff County Council (Beverley Bailey)
Pensaer/Dylunydd Trefol Architectural/Urban Designer	Austin Smith Lord (Dennis Hellyer)
Ymgynghorwyr/Consultants	Troup Bywater Andres (Chris Lynn) Mott MacDonald (Scott Tacchi)
Trydydd Parti/Third Party	n/a
Awdurdod Cynllunio/Planning Authority	Cardiff County Council

Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel  
Cadeirydd/Chair  
Swydog/Officer  
Prif Banelydd/Lead Panellist

Alan Francis  
Cindy Harris  
Lynne Sullivan  
Mark Hallett  
Gerard Ryan  
Phil Roberts  
Wendy Richards

Sylwedyddion/Observers

Kevin Woodward  
(UWE placement student)