

# 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	25 July 2012
Dyddiad cyhoeddi/issue date	3 August 2012
Lleoliad y cynllun/scheme location	Fabian Way Swansea
Disgrifiad y cynllun/scheme description	University campus
Scheme reference number	76C
Statws cynllunio/planning status	Cyn gwneud cais/ pre-application

Datganiadau o ddi-ddordeb/declaration of interests

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

### **Cyflwyniad/Presentation**

This scheme was previously reviewed by DCfW in March 2010. Since then the masterplan has received outline approval subject to Section 106 negotiations which are expected to be concluded very soon. This is the first of the reserved matters applications to come forward, based on the masterplan.

There are now two access points shown from the north, off Fabian Way. Vehicular movement is concentrated in the north of the site, and a temporary car park for 500 cars is shown to the west. The 'Smart' R&D building is located close to the main entrance, and academic buildings including the Great Hall and Learning & Resource Centre are grouped near the main public space - Gwalia Square. Dylan Thomas Way is seen as a residential street with student facilities and active uses at ground level. 1950 student rooms are planned in the first phase of residential development,

arranged in clusters round a common room and with entry from semi-private courtyards.

The local authority acknowledge that this is a work in progress and many changes have already been made. They think that the view from Fabian Way could be improved, and they await more detailed information on the public realm, design codes and materials. They are confident that this phase will work on its own, pending future phased development.

**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 welcomed the opportunity to review the development of this important project, although we would have liked to see it earlier and in more detail. We are supportive of the aspirations and ambitions which have driven the project thus far, but we think major issues remain to be resolved and some aspects – such as sustainability, public realm and landscape – are currently unacceptable and put at risk the success of the scheme as a whole. In summary:

- The strength of the design concept underpinning the masterplan is diminished by this proposal.
- While we welcome the appointment of a second major architectural practice, this has led to a disparate scheme, given the apparent lack of an overall coordinator or champion/guardian of the original concept.
- We are not convinced that design codes are necessary but, as stated at the previous review 'the precision of the masterplan will need to be ensured, and the quality of the design and detailing will need to be tightly controlled'. It is clear from this review that the coherence and quality of the masterplan has already been significantly eroded.
- We had some reservations about the layout of buildings around Gwalia Square, and the elevational treatment of the residential blocks.
- As stated at the previous review, a commitment to more ambitious sustainability standards would be highly desirable and appropriate for a publicly funded scheme such as this, where the client will be funding the running costs of these buildings for decades to come. Currently there is no evidence of an integrated approach to providing for the energy needs of 2000 students, and the project is in danger of not meeting future Welsh Building Regulations.
- The material on public realm and landscape issues was completely inadequate and we felt strongly that Atkins should have been present to justify their proposals. The treatment of public open spaces will hold the scheme together – or not – and is vital to the success of the whole phase.
- Visual impact has not been demonstrated. This should be agreed with the local planning authority from key viewing points.

- Given the lack of adequate information in certain areas, we would like to see this scheme again, ideally prior to the submission of a planning application.

## **Adran 2/part 2**

## **Trafodaeth ac Ymateb y Panel yn Llawn Discussion and panel response in full**

The Panel noted that the planning officer's report to committee referred to the recommendations made in the Design Review report of 30/3/2010, and we suggested that these be included in the discussion. We repeated our view that the proposed location was both isolated and insular and should ideally have formed an integral part of the existing campus and/or city. However, we accepted that the university had gone through a process of site selection and this matter was now decided.

The series of drawings with which we were presented had no accompanying explanatory text and therefore some further clarification was necessary to enable the Panel to understand the proposal fully. We noted that pedestrian connectivity appeared to be limited, with constraints on access to the SSSI to the east.

The Panel questioned whether it was the client's intention that the whole masterplan be built out eventually, and we were informed that this remained the ambition. While there can be no guarantees at the moment, it is expected that phase 2 of the development will follow within a short period. The Panel would have preferred to see an approach to phasing which maintained the coherence of the design at each stage of growth.

The Panel was concerned about the apparent divergence from the design philosophy underpinning the masterplan, which is clearly evident in the revised design. For example the move away from perimeter blocks with entrances fronting directly onto streets towards blocks set back behind a narrow landscaped strip, signifies a weakening in the promised urban grain and could reduce the degree of street activity and animation.

In our view the public realm and landscape issues have not been adequately addressed, and more detailed information is needed to form a convincing part of a detailed planning application. In particular, visual images from key points, including Fabian Way and from the sea, should be provided. Anticipated desire lines of movement and places for informal activities and meeting should be shown and responded to. Cycle storage would be better located within buildings at ground floor level, replacing some ground floor rooms with a use more acceptable at street level while removing a potentially unsightly use from the courtyards. It was disappointing not to see drawings that clearly represented the possibilities for communal life at street level – for example building entrances and public or semi-public uses in various buildings at ground level.

The Panel thought that the group of buildings around Gwalia Square required a more contextual response. There is an awkward relationship between the Great Hall and the Learning & Resource Centre. The experience of entering the site from the north, and in particular the positioning of the 'Smart' building, does not currently convey the nature or significance of the development.

The Panel would like to see more variety in the fenestration of the residential blocks, reinforcing the variety already established with facade materials and details, and perhaps relating directly to internal organisation and function. While we understood the need for efficiencies, we were sceptical that the savings to be gained by ordering the great majority of windows of a single type would be significantly greater than an order consisting of four or five different window designs. We thought that some diversity and relief would improve the aspect from Fabian Way, especially given that the larger ground floor windows will not be seen.

The Panel was informed that the sustainability strategy produced by Arup follows the energy hierarchy and includes passive energy reduction measures. Most of the buildings will achieve BREEAM Very Good while the Innovation Hub is required to achieve BREEAM Excellent. We were surprised and disappointed that a scheme of this size and significance would only meet the statutory minimum in terms of environmental performance, and we urged the client in particular to consider the whole life benefits of investing in further measures to reduce future energy costs.

While we understood that the Carbon Trust was looking at the feasibility of a district heating scheme, we noted that the mix of uses and eventual quantum of development would appear to favour a community scale CHP system. Although the demand for heat should be minimal in well insulated buildings, there will be a significant hot water demand which could be met cheaply and efficiently by such a system. Even if this is judged to be currently unfeasible, the Panel urged the team to install the necessary pipework at the infrastructure stage to enable future retrofitting of low carbon technologies.

A sustainable drainage strategy will be included in the landscape plans, and all surface water will drain out to sea. Targets for sustainable and recycled materials will be included in the procurement process. We were told that daylight and solar access studies have been carried out, and have led to some changes in fenestration. It will be important to show how shading will impact on the internal courtyards at different times of the year.

As developers for the first phase, St Modwens will seek early contractor involvement and will aim to involve the design teams for as long as possible to oversee and maintain design quality.

**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 fydddech 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.**

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***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	Swansea University (Iwan Davies, Phil Gough) St Modwen (Neil Williams)
Pensaer/Dylunydd Trefol Architectural/Urban Designer	Porphyrios Associates (Samina Shahzady, Tatiana Lampridi) Hopkins Architects (David Selby)
Ymgynghorwyr/Consultants	Savills (Nick Matthews) Quayle Munro (Stephen Bell)
Trydydd Parti/Third Party	n/a
Awdurdod Cynllunio/Planning Authority	Neat Port Talbot CBC (Chris Davies, Nicola Lake)
Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/ Design Review Panel Cadeirydd/Chair Swydog/Officer Prif Banelydd/Lead Panellist	Wendy Richards Cindy Harris Richard Parnaby Ashley Bateson Simon Carne

Sylwedyddion/Observers

Emma Parsons (Cardiff CC)