

**Statws/Status:**  
**Cyfrinachol / Confidential**



**Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio:**  
**Design Review Report:** 13 October 2005

**Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd:**  
**Meeting Date / Material Submitted:** 6 October 2005

**Lleoliad/Location:** Altbridge, Whitford

**Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun**  
**Scheme Description:** Care Home for the Elderly

**Cleient/Asiant:**  
**Client/Agent:** Guardian Care Homes [UK] Ltd

**Pensaer/Architect:** Young & Gault [Gillian Shields]

**Awdurdod Cynllunio:**  
**Planning Authority:** Flintshire CC [Kirsty Martin,  
Peter Jones, Glyn D Jones]

**Statws Cynllunio:**  
**Planning Status:** Outline planning granted 1988  
Detailed application pending

**Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel:**  
Alan Francis (cadeirydd/chair) Paul Vanner  
Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer) Nick Davies  
Wendy Hall Elfed Roberts

**Lead Panellist:** Nick Davies

**Cyflwyniad/Presentation**

The site is in wooded parkland which adjoins the Downing historic walled garden, and includes a three storey Georgian residential building. Although the principle of developing a

care village in this location has been established since 1988, the original consented design is no longer viable for various practical reasons.

The proposals were revived earlier this year and the client suggested a 40-50 bed EMI [elderly mentally infirm] unit; a 40-50 bed residential care unit; and a 20 bed assisted care unit. The planning authority rejected the size of the proposed accommodation in pre-application discussions. The current scheme provides for 40-45 'assisted living' care apartments, with a Day Centre on the ground floor of the existing main building, but no EMI facilities.

The existing Georgian house [not listed but of significant local interest] is presumed to be structurally sound, but will be gutted and refitted internally. An existing conservatory surrounding the main entrance on the south elevation will be demolished, and the facade restored. Existing outbuildings and extensions are in a poor state of repair and will be demolished and replaced with new blocks of care accommodation.

The current design proposals have reviewed the scale and massing of the proposed buildings, as well as the response to the topography and existing building. The intention is that the new development should reflect an ancillary, out-building style and have a contemporary design. Three site layout options have been identified as well as some indicative elevations. Each of these options is considered viable and there is no particular preference on the part of the client. A fourth option was tabled during this review which was a response to a suggested solution from the planning authority comprising a combination of options 1 and 2.

In general, the local planning authority is prepared to consider a slight increase in size over the consented scheme, as suggested in the option studies, as long as it offers architectural improvements. There are some site constraints, such as the long, single-track access road, and the developer is required to respond to concerns raised by Highways.

### **Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response**

The Panel supported the design concept of retaining and enhancing the existing building, together with developing a courtyard of ancillary type buildings. Elevations and materials should be simple and locally referenced. We would like to see a clearly demarcated main entrance on the south side of the main building, reinstating the original form if possible, and a welcoming reception area. The Day Centre will include a small cafe, doctor's room, therapy room, and a small gym. All units will be fully accessible.

A major design issue which needs to be resolved at an early stage, is whether the new accommodation will be physically linked to the existing building, or kept separate. The Panel recommended that research be conducted into the state of the south west facing gable wall on the existing building, and the implications of exposing it if the new development were to be kept separate. [Likewise the front facade should be examined for any evidence of the form of the original entrance.] In any event, the new blocks should not be allowed to dominate the existing historic house, but should be treated as ancillary outbuildings.

The Panel thought that the fourth option presented was moving in the right direction, but that the rear extensions to the main building were still too big. Any extension should be

subservient to the main building and for that reason, we preferred the option of a completely separate new development.

The Panel supported the idea of a long retaining wall and landscaped garden to the west, on the site of an old walled garden, remnants of which are still visible. There is an opportunity here to create some wonderful open spaces using the difference in levels, which would complement the buildings and allow them to settle gently into the landscape. There should be a clear definition of public and private space, evolving from a comprehensive spatial analysis of the retained existing and new accommodation. The suggestion of a covered walkway linking the new build with the original was supported, especially if it could be integrated with the retaining wall.

The Panel recognised that the landscape treatment would be fundamental to the success of this scheme and recommended that a landscape architect be instructed to prepare a full survey and develop a landscape strategy, including the access road and parking areas. Parking provision should be dealt with more imaginatively than at present and the main entrance area should be treated as more than a circulation space. Existing trees in the central hard-surfaced area may be a constraint to this and should not necessarily be retained. The landscape strategy should engage with the width and definition of the historic park boundary, rather than allowing it to constrain the design, and should consider ongoing management of the tree stock.

The Panel would like to see more evidence of sustainability features incorporated into the design. In particular, the new block layout should be oriented to take best advantage of solar access to the apartments and courtyard space. The possibility of a district heating system, possibly run on biofuels, should be explored. In any event, we would not wish to see individual electric heating systems for each apartment.

The client is satisfied that the commercial viability of these proposals has been established through demographic studies.

### **Crynodeb/Summary**

The Panel welcomed the proposals for replacing the existing derelict outbuildings, and for restoring the main Georgian house. In particular we would recommend:

- The new development should be treated as ancillary to, and separate from, the main house, subject to an investigation of the state of the gable wall. Any linked extension should be subservient and smaller than anything which has been suggested so far.
- A new main entrance to the existing house should be created, which would ideally reflect the original form, based on any remaining evidence.
- New buildings should be simple in form and material expression.
- We support the idea of a covered walkway integrated with the proposed retaining wall.
- A landscape architect should be retained to develop a full landscape strategy and this should be incorporated into the planning application as one scheme.
- The courtyard development should be re-oriented to make best use of solar gain.
- Low carbon heating systems and fuels should be explored.

### **Diwedd/End**

**NB A Welsh language copy of this report is available upon request.**