

Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

Review Status: **Public**

Meeting date:	17th February 2010
Issue Date:	26th February 2010
Scheme Location:	Bryn House, Penmaen, Gower
Scheme Description:	Residential
Planning Status:	Application submitted November 2009

Part1: Presentation

This is the fourth time that DCFW has reviewed a scheme on this site, and the second time that we have commented on this particular proposal. Since the last review in November 2009, detailed aspects of the scheme have been progressed:

Daylight levels have been improved by the introduction of a rooflight allowing north light into the kitchen and corridor space. The glazing system has been specified as 'Skyframe' which has a slender [28mm wide] mullion section. The stonework will use traditional field stone from the demolition of the existing building and laid in random courses, but door and window openings will be crisply defined with steel frames. The slab edges and parapets have been reprofiled to achieve a more slender appearance and the balcony will appear as an extension of the floor slab. The internal layout on the lower ground floor has been resolved to give each bedroom its own character.

The aim is still to achieve Code for Sustainable Homes [CSH] Level 4 and an LZC [low/zero carbon] feasibility study has been prepared by Saba.

The Local Planning Authority stated that their 'Replacement Dwelling' Policy requires that this must be a building of exceptional design quality. They are content with the proposed scale and massing and the external landscape strategy is welcomed and reinforces the design philosophy. In their view the design is developing in a satisfactory way and will be acceptable, subject to conditions. The visual impact is not seen as problematic.

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

The Panel welcomed the opportunity to see this scheme again before the application is determined. Despite our initial reservations about the accuracy of the pre-review material and in particular of the CGI [computer generated image], we were somewhat reassured by additional information given on the day and especially by the model. We think this is a good design approach [with the potential to be very good] but we still have major reservations about the translation of the concept into reality:

- The proposed height, scale and massing are accepted.
- The Local Authority, the local community and DCFW all need to be convinced that this will be a building of exceptional quality. Many issues of detail remain to be resolved, however, and the Local Authority should delay determination until these details [concerning elevations, landscape and sustainability] have been submitted and approved, rather than relying on controlling quality through conditions. These details should include accurate photomontages of key views.
- The simplicity and refinement of the elevations need to be safeguarded and materials, detailing and colours of the parapets, balcony edges and brises-soleil will be critical.
- We supported the landscape strategy as presented at the previous review, but noted the importance of agreeing appropriate planting schemes, and reinforcing the rear hedge with additional tree planting.
- The sustainability strategy is still insufficiently resolved for a planning application, and we emphasized the importance of achieving a low energy building fabric, before considering LZC technologies.
- We welcomed the active engagement of the client in this project.

Part 2: Discussion and Panel Response in Full

As stated at the previous review, the Panel has no objection to the proposed scale and massing, and we noted that this scheme was now 1m lower than the consented scheme.

It was unfortunate that some of the material provided to us before the review [and presumably submitted as part of the planning application] was not current and this should be remedied. We thought that it was still necessary to produce updated CGI images of the building, taken from strategic viewpoints on public footpaths as agreed with the Local Authority.

The Panel welcomed the development and refinement of various details. The choice of a glazing system with a dark coloured frame of minimum width is appropriate, although we noted that the sections are correspondingly deep, and will impact on oblique views. The glass should be specified to avoid large areas of highly reflective surfaces. Given this recessive glazing system, the details of parapets, copings, edges and columns will stand out more and need to be carefully detailed.

The concept of a strong horizontal emphasis with floor slabs expressed, is compromised by the need to insulate the slabs. A detailed design that minimises the depth of structure and yet provides the required insulation, whilst maintaining the elegance of the balcony slab is a particular challenge. The change from grass to gravel on the south facing roof was endorsed as this will give a more slender profile. We questioned the need to insulate the

balcony and brises-soleil, and thought that a more elegant solution might be to treat the balcony separately, outside the thermal envelope. All these details need to be very carefully and thoroughly developed at a small scale, so as to subsequently inform the elevations.

The Panel appreciated the extension of the wall to the south of the main entrance beyond the building, and suggested that this could be taken further to connect with the garage. This would have the effect of tying the building into the landscape more effectively. Although there is considerable existing vegetation which acts as a barrier along this boundary, the team agreed to consider this. The team was also asked to consider extending the rooflight further west towards the front door.

The landscape strategy was set out at the previous review and no new material was presented. It was confirmed that CCW [Countryside Council for Wales] have been consulted and that excess fill has been removed from site. Dead trees have been removed from the rear boundary and will probably be replaced. The rear hedgerow will be reinforced and the Panel suggested that further tree planting would be desirable along the hedgerow. A wildflower/grass mix will be used on the rear roof. The hard and soft landscaping of the area between the garages and the western entrance to the house needs more consideration. More ecological inputs overall will help the achievement of higher sustainability ratings.

The sustainability strategy still needs to demonstrate how the building will meet the requirements of Code 4 and this should be included in the Design & Access statement. Decisions on the most appropriate LZC technologies are still pending, although it was stated that an air source heat pump would deliver the necessary 44% carbon saving. The impact on the site layout of using biomass, in terms of fuel storage and delivery, needs to be tested, along with any impact on the roofscape of additional plant, flues or solar panels. However, any technology-based solutions should be considered only after a highly efficient fabric with good air tightness has been achieved. Agreeing the final energy strategy will also have an impact on the ceiling heights and detailing of the interior, which in turn will determine glazing heights and the form of the exterior.

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

Mr & Mrs Morgan
[Louisa Morgan, Daphne Power]

Pensaer/Architect:	Powell Dobson Architects [Andrew Nixon]
Consultants:	Saba M&E [Phil Mead]
AwdurdodCynllunio/ Planning Authority	CC Swansea [David Gill, Tom Gronow]
Y Panel Adlygu Dylunio: Design review panel: John Punter [Chair] Cindy Harris [Officer] Alan Francis Elfed Roberts	Simon Carne Wendy Richards Simon Hartley Carole-Anne Davies [CEO, DCFW]
Lead Panellist:	Alan Francis
Sylwedyddion/Observers:	Matthew Kennedy [Grwp Gwalia]

Declaration of interest: Elfed Roberts stated that Gwalia is currently employing Powell Dobson on other projects.