

Statws/Status:

Cyfrinachol / Confidential



Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: Design Review Report:	18 December 2007
Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd: Meeting Date/Material Submitted:	05 December 2007
Lleoliad/Location:	Capitol Centre, Cardiff
Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun Scheme Description:	Mixed use residential
Developer/Datblygwr:	Moorfield [Edward Cade, Jacqui Hawthorn]
Cynllunio; Consultants:	Powys Jones Planning Consultant UIW Ltd [Keith Williams] Arup [Ian Fenner]
Pensaer/Architect:	Powell Dobson Architects [Bernadette Kinsella, Ann-Marie Smale, Elle Murzyn]
Awdurdod Cynllunio: Planning Authority:	Cardiff CC [Nigel Hanson]
Statws Cynllunio: Planning Status:	Pre-application
Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/ Design Review Panel: Richard Parnaby (cadeirydd/chair)	Michael Griffiths

Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer)
Charlie Deng (swyddog/officer)

Lyn Owen
Phil Roberts

Lead Panellist:

Lyn Owen

Sylwedyddion/Observers:

Alison Smith – WAG

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

The Design Review Panel previously reviewed this scheme in August 2006 . At this time the Panel considered the design to be an acceptable response to the site and context, but with reservations on the lack of active frontage along Station Terrace. The Panel suggested an arcade link from Queen Street to Queen Street Station and a further development of the elevational treatment for the proposed car park and the existing building. We welcomed the inclusion of the former cinema in this scheme and supported the proposed height and massing.

The current proposal reduces the number of towers from two to one, largely due to structural constraints, and locates the tower on the corner of Station Terrace and North Edward Street. An elliptical plan form was considered the best solution for the tower, with two narrow elevations facing key views, and the tower is stepped back twice from the 17th floor upwards. The 20-storey tower contains 164 dwelling units, mostly one and two bed flats, with 6 percent of affordable housing on site. The affordable housing occupies a separate block but shares the same entrance with the commercial housing. The tower has a mixed facade treatment of glass and coloured metal panels as well as some balconies. Commercial use is located on the first two floors of the tower with access to the street and into the existing centre. A colonnade is introduced at street level with a cantilevered roof containing a winter garden at second floor. A separate landscaped amenity space is provided for the residents. Two levels of additional parking are provided above the existing structure. Some remodelling of existing facades has been done to integrate the new development with its context. Early indications are that the scheme is likely to achieve a BREEAM 'Very Good' rating.

There have been numerous approaches to develop this site over the last two years. The Local Authority has developed a consistent response which outlines four major concerns:

- They would like to see a comprehensive approach to the facade treatment, including a ground floor linkage from Queen Street to Queen Street Station through the site,
- They have sought to minimise additional parking in this area because of traffic congestion,

- They would wish affordable housing to be provided on site but are prepared to be flexible on the 30% standard, and
- Any proposal has to address the public realm and maintain or improve connectivity.

With regard to this proposal, the Local Authority also has serious concerns about the proposed height and the proximity of the proposed tower to buildings on Landmark Place. They are unconvinced by the two deck car park element.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

The Panel supported the mixed use nature of the development, although we would like to have seen some office use included. We asked what factors had determined the proposed scale. The design team explained that due to structural reasons, the previous approach to add two towers was abandoned. They had looked at providing low rise residential use round the perimeter but this was too costly and the lightweight 2 storey car park was the practical limit of what could be built over the existing. The Panel considered that the height was appropriate and the proximity to Landmark Place [11-15 metres] was a real concern but could be mitigated in the detailed design of the tower.

In general the Panel thought that this proposal was an improvement on the previous one, and appreciated the proposed quality of the external cladding, which we were assured had been costed and was included in the budget. In terms of colour, we preferred the more muted version, rather than the 'warm, bright' one. We considered that the modelling of the top and base of the tower needed to be revisited. The top has a 'sawn off' appearance despite the setbacks, and we thought that the whole tower would appear more elegant if it met the ground directly. The over-complicated arrangement of cylindrical tower and projecting roof garden, supported on rather spindly insubstantial columns, needs simplifying to enable the tower to have a definite base.

The Panel again sought to explore the possibility of introducing an arcade linkage from Queen Street to Queen Street Station within the site. The design team repeated their previous explanation, namely that the current tenants were hostile to the idea [which they thought would lead to dissipation of footfall], and the structural constraints would make it difficult. They pointed out that a link already existed, albeit through the Hennies store.

The Panel agreed with the Local Authority that the number of parking spaces proposed was too generous, although we understood the desire to redress the shift in retail emphasis towards St Davids 2. We were informed that the proposed car park provides 220 new parking spaces together with the existing 407 spaces, and that no split has yet been decided between residential and commercial/retail use. Access and

management issues were also still under negotiation. However, the Panel maintained their view that the number of parking spaces should be reduced.

We were concerned about the entrance location for the roof deck parking, which we thought would worsen the current heavy queuing situation. The Panel was informed that this issue was under negotiation with the Highways department, with a view to relocating the entrance. We also had concerns about the quality of the finishes to the car park, despite the setback, which does not compare well with the rest of the scheme. The Panel thought that one extra floor of car parking would be more appropriate than two, for planning, aesthetic and practical reasons.

The Panel was surprised that a development of this scale had not been subject to wind testing. The structural engineer explained that the street level pedestrian environment would not be changed by the new tower, because existing structures would protect it from prevailing winds. The Panel was sceptical, given the likelihood of downdraughts and eddies, but we accepted that the cantilevered roof would offer some protection.

The Panel questioned the relatively low figure of 6 percent affordable housing on site. The design team explained that the rest of the affordable contribution could be offsite, and it was the housing officers' preference to provide affordable housing in a separate block. The Panel considered that the internal layout of the tower appeared tight in places, and was made worse by the elliptical form. We were told that the design team was currently reviewing the internal plan and that the means of escape had been checked and was sufficient. We thought that the apartment mix was too restricted but were informed that the mix was based on the developer's experience and a professional letting agent's advice.

The Panel was disappointed by the low ambition for sustainability. We urged the design team to aim for BREEAM Excellent instead of Very Good, and to avoid the high carbon solution of individual electric heating. The design team explained that the scheme had only marginal financial viability, which made some compromise necessary. However, the Panel pointed out that low carbon design and performance would increase the long term asset value, and we encouraged the team to reconsider a single heating system. We suggested that the involvement of an ESCO [energy supply company] might make this more viable. It was noted that all new housing supported by Social Housing Grant currently must achieve BREEAM Very Good, but will soon be required to meet level 3 or 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel welcomed the re-presentation of this scheme which offered a much better design solution for the site. We support the general design strategy and think that

progress has been made since the last review. In our view the following, relatively minor, issues remain to be resolved:

- We support the proposed building height in this location. However the tower's relationship with Landmark Place needs to be reconsidered and its impact mitigated. This should be demonstrated by a physical model.
 - The Panel accepts the argument for some additional parking, but urges a reduction in the scale. One floor of parking only is considered acceptable, with improvements to management and car park access and high quality barrier materials.
 - We understand the explanation for not including the through link to Queen Street station although we still think it is highly desirable.
 - We would like to see a redesign of the tower top and base, to be as elegant as the main body of the tower.
 - We commend the high quality of the proposed cladding system and have confidence in the team to deliver it.
 - We think that a commitment to BREEAM Excellent is appropriate for this development. A single heating system should be provided for all uses in the scheme to maximise energy efficiency, although we accept that biomass would be difficult in this location.
 - We do not accept the reasons given for not carrying out a wind study test and we think this should be carried out as soon as possible to inform the design development
 - We are not clear how the roof garden is to be managed and its value to residents optimised. This amenity could be improved if parking levels were reduced.
-
- **Diwedd/End**

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