

Statws/Status:
Cyfrinachol / Confidential



Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: Design Review Report:	15 December 2006
Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd: Meeting Date / Material Submitted:	6 December 2006
Lleoliad/Location:	Carmarthen town centre
Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun Scheme Description:	Retail/leisure
Developer/Datblygwr:	Simons Development [Niall Southwell]
Pensaer/Architect:	Clarity [Keith Neill-Smith] Rio Architects [Richard Roberts]
Cynllunio/Consultants:	Project Centre [Amy Ford]
Awdurdod Cynllunio: Planning Authority:	Carmarthenshire CC [John Thomas]
Statws Cynllunio: Planning Status:	Outline permission granted Reserved matters imminent
Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel:	
Alan Francis [cadeirydd /chair] Cindy Harris [swyddog/officer] Charlie Deng [design review assistant] Lyn Owen	Douglas Hogg Phil Roberts Martin Knight Kieren Morgan
Lead Panellist:	Phil Roberts
Sylwedyddion/Observers:	Kathy MacEwen, CABE

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

This proposal was previously reviewed in March 2005 and January 2006. The overarching aim is to integrate the development into the town centre as an extension of the existing urban fabric rather than an 'edge-of-town' development. The new market hall has been located as close as possible to the town centre and in a position which allows the existing building to continue trading through the construction process. Pedestrian links have been maximised and there will be a raised surface and controlled crossing where the new route which continues Red Street to the north crosses St Catherine Street. The anchor store fronts this crossing point and a multi storey car park with approximately 900 spaces is located to the north west. A new public square will be created at the northern end of Red Street which will be a focus for leisure uses and will contain a major piece of public art.

All buildings are fully accessible and hug the back-of-pavement. Pedestrian routes and linkages are optimised and there is good provision for public transport. Cycle racks will be located around the edge of the development. Where appropriate, the facades are layered and stepped back to respond to existing lower-scale buildings, and a sheltered roof zone accommodates any necessary plant. The anchor store has been scaled down, with a more traditional treatment. Service cores on rear elevations are treated sympathetically to the same quality as other facades. External materials are predominantly render and stone.

The landscape strategy aims to avoid clutter and minimise street furniture. High quality paving materials will strengthen the north/south route and be extended into the new square and along St Catherine Street. The public artwork is shown in the form of a corten steel sundial and new benches will be made from granite and timber. New planting will be introduced on the north, east and west boundaries to screen the new development from residential areas.

The plan for the new market hall frees up the historic clock tower and returns it to the public realm. The footprint slightly straggles the existing market hall and adjoins existing retail units. The design analyses and responds to the problems of summer overheating with an energy-efficient envelope and north facing roof lights. Glulam beams support a zinc clad roof above stone walls. The new market stalls are designed to appear minimal and to act as a backdrop for the produce on sale.

We were informed that a reserved matters application is due to be made in the next few days. The Local Authority has had ongoing input and is happy with the scheme so far.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

The Panel supported the principle of this development and welcomed the permeability and the logic of the design development. We were pleased to see St Catherine Street remaining open to vehicles, but with the continuity of the pedestrian route maintained and strengthened by the surface treatment.

Although we thought the clock tower was still 'crowded', the Panel judged the design of the market hall to be well considered and of high quality. We were pleased

to see the form developing out of the environmental analysis, but the success of the building will depend on the quality of the materials and detailing.

However, we thought that the rest of the scheme did not display a similar architectural quality and the presentation lacked any elevational drawings. The strength of the urban thoroughfare did not appear to be reflected in the elevational treatments and the Panel suggested that facade widths should be varied to create visual interest and local reference. The rotunda on the Debenhams store appeared to be a weak compromise, although the Local Authority stated that they had requested a more subtle, rounded corner.

With regard to our earlier concerns arising from the review in January 06, the Panel considered that the issues of scale and massing had not been satisfactorily addressed, especially with regard to the multi storey car park and its impact on surrounding residential areas and amenities. We were told that barriers and low level lighting would be introduced to minimise any impact.

However, no design code has been proposed and the lack of residential uses detracts from any claim of genuine mixed use. We were informed that the brief did not include residential use as the Local Authority did not think this was appropriate. The design team stated that the massing had been reduced on the northern edge in particular, although in general the scale increases to the north to maintain commercial viability. Buildings have been modelled and cut back, and the separate auditoria of the cinema have been expressed. The Panel nevertheless thought that the composition and cladding of the cinema was too dominant when viewed from the south, an impression made worse by the reduction in height of the building in front of it to single storey.

Based on the presentation material, the Panel thought that sustainability considerations were not convincingly addressed. We were told that options were still being explored and we encouraged the team to prioritise the 'designing out' of energy intensive cooling systems and associated plant. A CHP district heating scheme would be a good match for a scheme of this scale and mix of uses, and would provide an energy efficient supply system. The developer was concerned about the effect on commercial viability and thought that prospective tenants would demand a choice of energy supplier. It was confirmed that natural local stone would be used rather than a reconstituted product.

The position of bus stops along St Catherine Road and the shelter design were not yet determined, and the Panel recommended that they include all-weather shelters. We suggested that some cycle parking should be located more centrally and the team agreed to explore this, providing that it did not conflict with pedestrian use.

The Panel suggested that a competition for local artists should be held to design the public artwork at the centre of the new square, which we thought required more bulk and presence. We would have liked to see more reference to the Welsh language including bilingual signs. We thought that the continuous green boundary strip may not be appropriate in all areas, for instance where there is no public access, and that a hard landscape treatment would reduce the need for future maintenance in these areas.

Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel supports many aspects of this scheme, including the permeability, street patterns and traffic control. We particularly welcome the architectural quality of the design for the new Market Hall. However, we think that further major revisions are necessary to achieve a development of the highest quality. In particular:

- We appreciate the modelling and townscape elements of the new square but we still have concerns about the massing, elevations and facade widths.
- We are not convinced by the claimed lack of viability for a more sustainable approach to retail development
- We would like to see public art integrated through the scheme and suggest a public competition for the major artwork
- We remain convinced that residential uses would have improved the overall sustainability of the scheme and would have helped to create a safer and more vibrant town centre

Diwedd/End

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