

Statws/Status:
Cyfrinachol / Confidential



Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: 9 November 2006
Design Review Report:

Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd: 1 November 2006
Meeting Date / Material Submitted:

Lleoliad/Location: Clydach, Swansea

Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun Primary Care Centre
Scheme Description:

Cleient/Asiant: Swansea LHB
Client/Agent: [Dorothy Edwards,
Helen Wainwright]

Developer/Datblygwr: Apollo Capital Projects
[John Dryburgh]

Pensaer/Architect: B3 Burgess [Robert James,
Ewan Dryburgh]

Awdurdod Cynllunio: City and Council of Swansea
Planning Authority: [Elfed Roberts, Keri Thomas,
Andrew Eustace]

Statws Cynllunio: Pre-planning
Planning Status:

Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel:

John Punter (cadeirydd/chair)	Ewan Jones
Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer)	Mike Biddulph
Charlie Deng (swyddog/officer)	Douglas Hogg
Michael Griffiths	

Lead Panellist: Michael Griffiths

This project arises from the recognition that new kinds of buildings are required to deliver new models of healthcare, which emphasise team working and multi-disciplinary provision. There is only one GP practice serving Clydach and this is housed in inadequate premises.

There has been thorough public consultation on this proposal, including partnering workshops for end users and stakeholders, and an AEDET assessment. The internal layout responds to the functional requirements, and has a central reception area, with views to all patient destinations. A chronic disease management suite located on the eastern side of the building, has a more controlled sub-waiting area. A small triangular planted courtyard has been formed between the converging single storey wings of the building and brings daylight into the western wing. There are breakout spaces for staff and good 'back of house' links for discreet access. The layout has been arranged to allow community use of the main waiting area out of hours. Low mono-pitched roofs reduce the massing and have a standing seam metal finish. Local materials and a domestic scale reinforce the welcoming and approachable appearance. External materials will be brought into the interior. The gable feature will function as a service void and as a signpost to the building from the road. A planted footpath with tactile landscaping leads to the main entrance from the High Street to the south.

The Local Authority representative reported that there were no specific planning policies relating to this backland site, which is land reclaimed from a railway embankment. The site is owned by Swansea CC, and currently used as an informal open space. The Council are concerned at the loss of a retail outlet in the town centre, owing to the relocation of a pharmacy, and with the legibility of the entrance from the road. Minimum parking standards have been applied.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

The Panel welcomed the high standard of the presentation material. We agreed that the chosen site was the best option of those available and that the overall bulk and massing were appropriate.

The Panel disagreed with the team's assertion that this was not a civic building, and we thought a domestic architectural treatment would be inappropriate. We thought that the entrance should be made more visible from High Street and the footpath approach, and that the rounded corner of the building to the west should be re-thought to reduce confusion and provide a stronger direction towards the entrance. At present the bin stores would be the first thing that an approaching pedestrian would see. We accepted that the 'chimney', together with any signage, would signal the building from some distance but were not convinced that it would make the building sufficiently obvious from the High Street. In general, we favoured the proposed canopy design over the entrance although we thought the 'hole', designed to deter loiterers, could be smaller.

The back lane which runs along the south eastern perimeter of the site is an intimidating pedestrian route, linking Vardre Road with the High Street, and creates a hostile and threatening environment. Although it is not a part of the current scheme it is immediately adjacent to it and is a public amenity which needs improving and making safe. Currently the

plan is to address this with an appropriate lighting and landscaping scheme and a security fence, but we doubted that this would be sufficient.

We explored the possibility of flipping the plan of the building over, so that it lies to the north of the diagonal accessway across the site. This would have the advantage of making the entrance more visible, and of opening up the area adjacent to the back lane as amenity space. This would then allow the removal of the existing hedge boundary and the creation of an open, illuminated landscaped area, with natural surveillance from the health centre users and staff. There are legal rights of access to the rear of the properties on the High Street, but we thought these could be accommodated.

The design team pointed out that if the building's position was flipped on the site, it would have an overbearing relationship with the properties to the east on St Johns Road, one of which has just been granted permission to extend its nursing home function. There are also rights of rear access to properties on this side of site which have to be maintained. It was generally agreed that the back lane area has to be improved. The team stated that in their opinion the bin stores were conveniently located for service access, and were reasonably attractive.

The Panel would like to see an alternative to the 2 metre high boundary fence treatment referred to in the documentation. The design team would also like the security arrangements to be subtle rather than obvious, using the landscaping where possible. The police have been consulted and access will be controlled at the north and south entrance points, with locked barriers at night.

The Panel applauded the functional internal layout and the [mostly] well daylit interiors. We suggested that the roof form, which breaks to create the courtyard in the single storey element, could be repeated for the 2 storey element, to bring light into the secondary waiting area. We thought this would have the added advantage of realising a more coherent and simple roof form. We supported the choice of external cladding and landscape materials.

The Panel thought that ideally the building would be located on the High Street. The intervening land, currently a car park, is owned by the Local Authority and is subject to separate access rights, while the car park to the north is leased to Clydach Community Council. We still thought that a more rational development site might be negotiated and it was seen as unfortunate that a lack of joined-up thinking within the Council was delivering a site that made a quality development much more difficult to achieve, while retaining significant 'space left over after planning' that invited anti-social behaviour. Even if the building stays in its present position, the problem remains of how to navigate the existing car park via a safe and accessible route in order to reach the start of the Health Centre footpath. The team thought that this could be done with paving materials, landscaping and signage. The Panel stated that in landscaping terms if nothing else, the site boundary should extend to the High Street.

We were told that a NEAT assessment had not yet been done and we thought that this was unfortunate, as sustainability measures need to be built in from the outset and inform the design development. The team confirmed that solar water heating and ground source heat pumps are under consideration.

Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel appreciated the standard of documentation and presentation material. We think that the best site option has been identified, given current constraints, but we also think that an opportunity has been missed to make the whole area safe and attractive. We consider minor amendments are necessary before the design is submitted for planning. In particular:

- The problems associated with the back lane area should be resolved either by reconfiguring the site layout, or by effective lighting, fenestration, surveillance and landscaping.
- The simplification of the roof form would provide visual coherence and should be used to introduce more daylight into the 2 storey element.
- The building and the entrance should be made more visible from the High Street approach and the bin store should be relocated
- We agree that security arrangements should be subtle and think that the best protection lies in natural surveillance and out-of-hours community use.
- We think that the landscaped approach should start from the High Street boundary and continue across the existing car park.
- We think that a NEAT assessment should have been carried out at an earlier stage and we would like to see a real commitment to incorporate some low carbon technologies into this scheme.

Diwedd/End

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