

Statws/Status:
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DESIGN
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CYMRU

Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: Design Review Report:	1 August 2007
Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Meeting Date:	25 July 2007
Lleoliad/Location:	Corwen
Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun Scheme Description:	Primary Care Development
Cleient/Asiant: Client/Agent:	Denbighshire LHB [Roy Drinkwater] Conwy & Denbighshire NHS Trust [Yvette Drysdale] Corwen Surgery [Dr Su Hesketh]
Developer/Datblygwr:	Apollo Capital Projects [Richard Meggitt, Rob James]
Pensaer/Architect:	B3 Architects [Shaun Prichard]
Ymgynghorwyr Cynllunio: Planning Consultants:	Edmund Kirby [Delwyn Jones]
Awdurdod Cynllunio: Planning Authority:	Denbighshire CC [Mark Dakeyne]
Statws Cynllunio: Planning Status:	Pre-planning
Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/ Design Review Panel: Wendy Richards (cadeirydd/chair)	Gerard Ryan

Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer)
Lyn Owen

Elfed Roberts
Nick Davies

Lead Panellist:

Gerard Ryan

Sylwedyddion/Observers:

Terry Stevens, DE&T
Ian Stevens, DE&T
Sian Wyn Jones, DenbighshireCC
Sarah Stubbs, Denbighshire CC

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

This scheme remains a priority scheme for the LHB. A public meeting was held last week and most feedback was very positive. Although some comments were made about the location, the Corwen community transport group confirmed that it could provide a comprehensive service for those needing to travel to the surgery. Questionnaires have been made available to canvas more local opinion.

With regard to the site selection, further research has been carried out and it has been established that this site is closer to 60% of users than a town centre site would be. Moreover, mitigation measures which would be necessary to develop a site in the town could exacerbate problems of flooding downstream.

The position of the building on the site is unchanged, and this is considered the best location to optimise views. The main entrance and car park are located to the rear but an additional pedestrian entrance is provided to the south, and a separate staff and service entrance to the west. The double-height reception and waiting area is well daylight and the internal layout is clear and legible. Staff facilities and a physiotherapy department are located at first floor. The pharmacy has been moved next to the southern entrance and helps to enliven that elevation.

A good quality buff brick is used externally at ground floor level, with rendered finishes at first floor and slate clad 'feature' walls at entrances. The angled columns at the front are currently shown in steel. The roof finish is a mixture of sedum and standing seam metal.

Daylight levels internally have been maximised. High standards of insulation will be included, along with solar water heating panels and a biomass boiler. A balancing pond will form part of a sustainable drainage system.

The Local Authority representative understood the difficulty of finding a suitable site in this area. Although this site is not allocated for development, it is in an area where new development is taking place and is likely to see further allocations. He was satisfied with the general approach of the scheme so far.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

The Panel appreciated the further justification of the site selection. While we accepted that the proposed site would be more convenient for many users, and easier to develop, we remained concerned about the implications for the future development and regeneration of Corwen town centre.

Our previous report had requested a masterplan for the whole site in relation to its context and we regretted that this had not been done, irrespective of the site ownership. As a consequence of the large undefined spaces around the edges, the building does not appear anchored on the site and fails to develop a good relationship with its surroundings. A simple masterplan still needs to be done to evaluate plot size and land take, and to include the road framework and access points. We thought that the site boundary could be tighter and this would benefit the scheme as a whole.

The Panel appreciated the greater prominence given to the pedestrian entrance to the south, but we remained to be convinced that this would work across a level difference of four metres down on to the adjacent road. This needs to be demonstrated by a site analysis, site sections and a movement and access study. We still thought that the entrances were not prominent enough and we were concerned that the main entrance could not be seen from the main vehicular access from the west, hidden as it is behind the projecting slate 'feature'. It would be a major weakness of the scheme if people had to rely on signage to navigate by. We were concerned that the service / delivery / parking area to the south west would become too congested, although we were informed that the emergency access for ambulances was for transporting patients away from the surgery only. Nevertheless, we thought that a lot of pressure was being placed on a tight walled area and, as this is the first element seen on entering the site, it needs more development and resolution.

The Panel found it difficult to understand the rationale for the non-orthogonal form of the east wing, which would make internal furnishing awkward and difficult, and which would be compromised by future expansion. The team stated that the cdm rooms would not be consulting rooms and would be furnished more informally, but we were still concerned about their future adaptability. It was confirmed that 30%

expansion space was already built in to the existing footprint, and so any further expansion was unlikely in the near future.

We thought that the location of the pharmacy would make servicing and deliveries difficult and it was agreed that this needs to be addressed. One option proposed by the team was to form an internal link to the pharmacy. The Panel pointed out that the position of the lift obstructed visibility of the corridor from the reception desk. In this respect, the internal arrangement was less successful than the previous scheme. There were options for closing off parts of the ground floor accommodation to facilitate out of hours use. While welcoming the introduction of daylight to ground floor corridors, we agreed that the void at first floor needed refining, so as not to create awkward circulation.

We were informed that the external glulam structure was not favoured by the user group, and the projecting columns are currently shown in steel, but with the finish unresolved. The external brises-soleil may be in timber and exposed glulam trusses remain internally.

The Panel welcomed the provision of a detailed sustainability statement and particularly the inclusion of a biomass heating system. We would encourage the developer to include other – perhaps residential – uses of this system to maximise its efficiency and financial viability. We would like to see more daylight in ground floor corridors, but not at the expense of creating bottlenecks at first floor level, and thought this could be done with sunpipes. We advised that floor finishes should be dark-coloured and hard, to provide good thermal storage. We welcomed the consideration given to sustainable drainage and thought that the environmental benefits of green roofs should be maximised by incorporating them throughout.

A desk top ecological assessment of the site has indicated a need to preserve the existing hedgerow. We thought that this should form part of an integrated landscape strategy for the site, maximising biodiversity potential and the wider landscape setting. The strategy should also aim to humanise and break up the large central area of hard surfacing, and the proposed parking numbers should be justified as being appropriate and minimal.

The project team stated that they favoured a traditional procurement method and although this does entail some risk, they were satisfied that this would sit mainly with the architect. In addition they are looking at hybrid procurement routes such as a modified D&B.

Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel welcomed the opportunity to review this revised scheme and we consider that progress has been made. We do think that some of the issues that still need resolution would have become obvious had our previous request for a full site analysis been undertaken, as that is the key to ultimate clarity. We think that relatively minor - but important - issues remain to be resolved. In particular:

- The lack of a masterplan is a fundamental problem and has led to a lack of resolution around the edges of the site. We think that a simple masterplanning exercise should still be carried out to inform the whole site strategy and resolve the layout in relation to where the entrances are.
- A landscape consultant should be engaged as soon as possible to help develop the site layout. The hard central area should be broken up more and an appropriate level of parking provision should be justified.
- The entrances and access arrangements, including the layout of the reception area, lift and waiting areas need to be further refined and tested. The public entrances should be made more visible and legible on both sides of the building.
- The curved form and internal layout of the building's east wing needs to be justified and the advantages set against the disadvantages of fitting out non-orthogonal spaces.
- We would like to see a re-assessment and development of the south west delivery and parking bay, to avoid possible congestion and confusion of uses.
- We strongly support the sustainability measures proposed, particularly the biomass heating system, and urge that this be extended to include adjacent developments. We believe that the scheme is now at a stage when some of the sustainability measures should be committed to, and the NEAT assessment adjusted accordingly, so that the DCfW can understand what will actually be delivered.
- We are reassured to learn that the team intend to retain control of the design quality throughout the procurement process.
- While we understand the reasons given for the choice of site, we also recognise that there are grave implications for the future regeneration of Corwen town centre, if all similar developments follow the same logic and are located out of town.

DCFw will undertake a further assessment of the proposal, on receipt of revised drawings [3 hard copies and 1 electronic copy] addressing the above points, and will issue a written response.

Diwedd/End

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