

**Statws/Status:**

**Cyfrinachol / Confidential**

DESIGN  
COMMISSION  
FOR WALES  
COMISIWN  
DYLUNIO  
CYMRU

<b>Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: Design Review Report:</b>	<b>19th April 2007</b>
<b>Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Meeting Date :</b>	<b>11th April 2007</b>
<b>Lleoliad/Location:</b>	<b>Corwen</b>
<b>Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun Scheme Description:</b>	<b>Primary Care Centre</b>
<b>Cleient/Asiant: Client/Agent:</b>	<b>Denbighshire LHB [Roy Drinkwater] Conwy &amp; Denbighshire NHS Trust [Elizabeth Morgan, Yvette Drysdale]</b>
<b>Developer/Datblygwr:</b>	<b>Apollo Medical [Rob James, Richard Meggitt]</b>
<b>Pensaer/Architect:</b>	<b>B3 Burgess [Ewan Dryburgh, Bruce Massie]</b>
<b>Awdurdod Cynllunio: Planning Authority:</b>	<b>Denbighshire CC</b>
<b>Statws Cynllunio: Planning Status:</b>	<b>Pre-application</b>
<b>Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/ Design Review Panel: Wendy Richards (cadeirydd/chair) Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer) Charlie Deng (swyddog/officer) Carole-Anne Davies, CEO</b>	<b>Roger Ayton Ed Colgan Michael Griffiths Ewan Jones</b>

**Lead Panellist:**

**Roger Ayton**

**Sylwedyddion/Observers:**

**Mallory Armstrong WHE  
Jerry Spencer, RENEW**

### **Cyflwyniad/Presentation**

A thorough site option appraisal of all available sites in and around Corwen has identified the current preferred site. This is an out of town, greenfield site, but according to the presentation material is designated for employment use within the UDP. It was stated that the Primary Care Centre will not only serve the residents of Corwen but surrounding villages. The site is largely flat, with excellent views to the south across the Dee valley and is bounded by:

- a pedestrian/cycle way to the north along the line of a disused railway.
- The B5437 to the south
- Residential development to the east.
- Light industrial units to the west

The design team described a 'simple', but cranked, plan form with two wings accommodating south facing waiting area, consulting rooms and dental surgery; and north facing treatment rooms, administration and pharmacy. The main entrance is located to the north accessed from the car park and there is a separate dentist entrance, also from the north.

The built form is determined by considerations of sustainability. An exposed glulam frame supports a first floor staff balcony and brises soleil on the south facade, and rests on steel columns at the rear. A biomass boiler is included, fuelled by locally produced wood pellets. The sedum roof will accommodate some form of solar collection and north facing rooflights, to bring daylight into corridors and provide passive ventilation. A highly glazed, double height reception area creates a well daylit, airy space and exploits views of the valley. Local materials will be used including local slate for cladding.

A letter from the Local Authority was received giving in principle support to the proposal, although it was stated that the site lies outside the development boundary identified in the UDP.

### **Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response**

In spite of the site options appraisal, the Panel did have some concerns about the choice of an out of town site, and we would have preferred to see a more central site to Corwen developed, to support the regeneration

of the town centre. While we accept that the planned expansion north of the river offers the prospect of some integrated community and service roles, the site selected is located adjacent to employment/light industrial uses which we doubt can be made compatible with a public building. We were also concerned that the proposal has not grasped the potential of the location, with an unresolved amount of undefined, left-over space on this large site.

We noted that a bus stop was provisionally located on site, but we thought that this was less important than ensuring a frequent service along the B5437.

The Panel questioned the location of the main entrance away from the road, which appeared to reinforce the separation from the town. It was pointed out that an alternative pedestrian entrance is located at the front of the building, giving direct access into the waiting area, and we would like to see this given equal or greater prominence than the current main entrance, to aid legibility and reinforce the public function of the building. Ancillary accommodation should be located to the rear, north facing elevations.

The Panel thought that the position of the building on the site and the cranked form appeared arbitrary and lacked a design rationale. The designer stated that they had wanted to adopt a shallow plan and maximise the length of the south facing elevation, within the constraints of the overhead power cables, and the crank represented a rationalisation of an original curved plan. The intention was to step the building down and back at the main entrance from the south east, and present arrivals with an attractive facade rather than a two storey gable. It was deliberately understated at this point and not seen as a civic building.

We disagreed about its civic nature, and considered that the design approach had fallen between two stools, failing to address either the site or the road and views to the south in a satisfactory way. We thought that a much clearer design approach was needed, which resolves some of the apparent contradictions presented [eg understated/civic; simple/cranked], and is based around a refined, simple, rectilinear form. Resolving the relationship between the site and frontages, and the integration with external spaces and their function, would help to create a sense of place.

The Panel applauded the sustainability strategy and the measures that have been taken to ensure a low carbon building, based on a traditional procurement route. We questioned the necessity of including steel columns with the glulam frame and the design team agreed to look at this again with their structural engineers.

The Panel advised that a masterplan strategy should be developed for the whole site, including a development framework and landscape structure. This framework could be a relatively simple document covering all aspects of longer term development in this area, which would influence the design solution for the Primary Care Centre whilst also recognising that this first development would set a precedent. We thought that lessons should be learned from the redundancy and proposed demolition of the existing 17 year old surgery building.

### **Crynodeb/Summary**

The Panel was pleased to review this proposal, but we have major reservations about the design approach and consider it to be an unacceptable response to the site. In particular:

- We recommend that, in close consultation with the landowners and the Local Planning Authority, Planning Policy Team, a masterplanning exercise is carried out for the whole site, to establish a development framework for the current proposal and future development.
- While we support the narrow plan form and layout, we think that the built form needs to be stronger and simpler, with a rationalisation of storey heights and floor plates.
- We have concerns about the location of the main entrance and advise that the pedestrian entrance to the south should be given equal prominence.
- We are disappointed that the building does not relate well to its immediate context, and we think this is a lost opportunity for a civic statement on an open site of this nature.
- We applaud the commitment that has been made to a sustainable building and low carbon operation, along with a procurement method which seeks to protect this. We would like to see the environmental advantages of the glulam frame maximised in a consistent structural system.
- While we recognise that a site options appraisal has been carried out, we nevertheless have concerns about the proposed location, in terms of its accessibility and the effect on the town centre of removing such a primary public function.

We will carry out a further full review of this scheme, once revised proposals are submitted.

**Diwedd/End**

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