

Although Confidential at the time of review, this report has now been made **Public** on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2011. It should be noted however, that it refers only to the version of the scheme seen in February 2009.

# Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

## **Review Status: Confidential**

Meeting date:	18th February 2009
Issue Date:	3rd March 2009
Scheme Location:	Dickie's Boatyard site, Bangor
Scheme Description:	Residential
Planning Status:	Pre-application

## **Part1: Presentation**

The site was acquired by the developer in 2006. It is identified for development in the UDP, and comprises Phase 1 of the Hirael Bay masterplan, also being prepared by BDP on behalf of Gwynedd County Council, Watkin Jones, Penrhyn Estate and Bangor University, and funded by the Welsh Assembly Government. The eastern part of the site is within a C2 flood area, the boundary of which virtually coincides with a public right of way running north/south. This proposal relates to land west of that boundary and includes 70 dwelling units on approximately 1 hectare, consisting primarily of 2 bedroom accommodation.

The proposed development would strengthen links between the existing communities of Garth and Hirael. Garth Road would be widened where it adjoins the site boundary and a new roundabout is planned for the junction between Garth Road and Beach Road.

The Local Planning Authority have been involved in many iterations of the site plan. They welcome the later version with the new houses brought forward onto Garth Road and the parking removed. The blocks on Beach Road should relate more to the larger Victorian villas in the vicinity. The proposed use is supported as part of the wider masterplan.

## **Summary of key points arising from discussion, to be read in conjunction with Part 2 of this report.**

The Panel was pleased to review this scheme as an important and deliverable first phase of the wider masterplan. We support the proposed use and the initial design approach. However, we have major concerns about the proposed access and regret the apparent lack of any flexibility on the position taken by the Highways department. This concern is

absolutely central to our response and needs to be resolved before more detailed matters can be discussed. In summary:

- The proposed access is unacceptable and the preferred access from Beach Road as shown in the Hiraal Bay masterplan should be pursued further, to deliver a far better quality of residential development, far less disturbance to Garth Road, and much better access to the harbour itself and other waterfront sites to the south east.
- Greater clarity is needed as regards likely developments in Phase 2, and firm proposals need to be combined with a public realm framework for the whole site, so that the interface with the residential development can be planned accordingly.
- Frontages onto Glandwr Road need to be kept active at ground floor level and relate well to the street. The apartments on Garth Road should have their primary entrance from the street.
- If there is no real possibility of an access from Beach Road, then an access point further north along Garth Road would be preferable to that currently proposed, in order to allow a better residential layout overall.
- We do not support the proposal for a roundabout, which would impede pedestrian accessibility and increase traffic dominance.
- The proposed 'Home Zone' is unconvincing and would work much better without through traffic.
- The roofline treatment needs rationalising and a greater variety of fenestration introduced. Different treatments should be developed to respond to the Victorian villas, smaller cottages and former boatyard area. Coloured render should be the predominant external finish.
- Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 should be made a firm commitment and infrastructural works should include pipework for a district heating system. The provision of more private amenity space and balconies should be considered.

## **Part 2: Discussion and Panel Response in Full**

The Panel's first and major concern was with the proposed main access into the site, from Garth Road to the west. This would be used to gain access to the hotel, cafes and apartments envisaged in Phase 2 to the east, and has the unfortunate effect of segregating the southern portion of this site from the main body of the development. It is unlikely to become the sort of residential street space promoted in Manual for Streets and provide a quality residential environment. This is particularly important given the relative lack of external amenity space and the unconvincing nature of the proposed 'Home Zone'.

While it was generally recognised that the proposed access is not an ideal solution, the preferred alternative access from Beach Road has been ruled out by the Highways Department. Furthermore, any possibility of an entrance from Beach Road is prejudiced by the difficulty of acquiring the petrol station or the social club at the southern end of Glandwr Road. However, the Panel was firmly of the view that an access point to the site could be established at this location, and would be the best way of accessing both phases of development on the boatyard, and also access to the development site to the south east.

A second best alternative would be to take access from Garth Road, but further north. This would allow two more equally sized development blocks, with a stronger perimeter block solution and a better definition of fronts and backs of houses. It would also offer a direct link with the potential amenity area around the jetty in Phase 2. Although this solution would be less popular with existing residents on Garth Road, we think it would work much better for the new development than the current proposal.

The Panel does not support the proposal for a future roundabout at the south western corner of the site which would compromise pedestrian access and permeability, and provide a more difficult context for the corner buildings to relate to.

We would like to see more information about the basic layout and uses proposed for Phase 2, and in particular a public realm framework for the whole site [both phases]. The town houses on the eastern edge of Phase 1 need ground floor activity to relate well to Glandwr Road and the potential new public space. The primary access to the apartments in the western area should be from Garth Road to engage positively with the context and reflect the established character.

We would prefer to see the predominant external treatment as coloured render rather than brickwork, as shown in the precedent examples. Although yellow and red brickwork is apparent in this context, rendered finishes dominate particularly in the view from Porth Penrhyn. The treatment of blocks fronting roads needs to be more consistent and subtle. The earlier image showing a series of stepped gables is preferable to the current mix of gables and pitched roofs. A greater variety of fenestration, as well as roofscape, would improve the design. The varied context of key frontages, notably the difference between those on Garth Road and those facing the harbour, suggest a different architectural approach that should reflect different environments.

There should be a firm commitment to achieve CSH Level 4. The infrastructure works should include provision for a district heating system which could link to Phase 2 and non-domestic uses in the future. Any improvement in the provision of private external amenity space would be recognised in the Code and we thought the inclusion of some balconies would certainly improve amenity and add value. Ideally we would like to see some undercroft parking to release ground floor areas for street activity and communal open space.

**The Design Commission for Wales Design Review Panel and staff welcome further consultation and will be happy to provide further feedback on this report and/or where appropriate, to receive further presentations. Thank you for consulting the Commission and please keep in touch with us about the progress of your project.**

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

## **Appendix 1: Attendees**

Asiant/Client/Datblygwr:

Watkin Jones [Jeff StPaul]

Agent/Client/Developer

Pensaer/Architect:

BDP [Peter Shuttleworth, Eve Tiernan]

Consultants:

n/a

AwdurdodCynllunio/  
Planning Authority

Gwynedd CC [Hywel Thomas]

Y Panel Adlygu Dylunio:

Design review panel:

John Punter [Chair]

Cindy Harris [Officer]

Ewan Jones

Steve Smith

Roger Ayton

Lynne Sullivan

Lead Panellist:

Steve Smith

Sylwedyddion/Observers:

Simon Carne [DCFW Panellist]

Nia Morgan [DCFW placement student]